

**MULTI-PURPOSE COMMUNITY CENTRES:
A LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY TOWARDS
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND POVERTY
ALLEVIATION IN THE DWARS RIVER REGION**

by

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DECLARATION

I, the undersigned, hereby declare that the work contained in this assignment is my own original work and that I have not previously, in its entirety or in part, submitted it at any university for a degree.

DEDICATION

This study project is dedicated to God and my parents, Richard Bruiners and Joey-Joan (Tautè) Bruiners. They have always been there for me and they believed in me, even when I lost hope.

Summary

In South Africa, Multi-Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs) have been identified as the primary approach for the implementation of development communication and information as they potentially offer a wide range of services that communities can utilise for their own empowerment. This affords the community an opportunity to become more self-reliant. The new Local Economic Development (LED) policy paper (2002) highlights the mobilisation of internal resources, capacities and skills consistent with the sustainable development objectives that government is now more aggressively pursuing.

Community participation and empowerment play a significant role in any community, therefore, municipalities need to create the conditions for greater public participation and empowerment. It should be done with regards to the disadvantaged or marginalised groups in accordance with the conditions and capacities in a municipality. In the Dwars River region, various services are being planned ranging from skills development to tourism, but these depend on sufficient financial aid.

The nature and location of the MPCCs in South Africa makes financial sustainability difficult because the majority of them largely serve historically disadvantaged communities with limited financial resources to pay for services. It is also important to note that economic growth does not necessarily imply poverty alleviation and/or skills development as components of the government's communication and information approach. MPCCs can transform communities but will be time consuming and requires participation from all spheres of government and civil society.

Opsomming

In Suid Afrika was Veeldoeninge Gemeenskap Sentrums geïdentifiseer as die primêre benadering vir die implementering van informasie en kommunikasie programme, veral omdat hierdie programme 'n reeks dienste aanbied, wat die gemeenskap kan benut vir hul eie bemagtiging. Dit gee aan die gemeenskap die geleentheid om meer onafhanklik te word. Die nuwe Plaaslike Ekonomiese Ontwikkelings beleidsdokument (2002) beklemtoon die mobilisering van interne hulpbronne, kapasiteit en vaardighede konstant met die volhoubare ontwikkelings objektiewe wat die regering meer aggresief nastreef.

Publieke deelname en bemagtiging speel 'n kenmerkende rol in die lewens van die gemeenskap. Verder blyk dit duidelik dat munisipaliteite, publieke deelname en bemagtiging moet bevorder. Munisipaliteite moet ook kondisies vir publieke deelname en bemagtiging skep. Hierdie twee strategieë moet veral toegepas word op vorig benadeelde en gemarginaliseerde groepe en gemeenskappe in lyn met die kondisies en kapasiteit van die betrokke munisipaliteit. Die Dwarsrivier Vallei bied verskeie dienste aan wat vaardigheidsontwikkeling en toerisme insluit. Dit sal grootliks afhang van die streek se finansiële kapasiteit.

Die aard en ligging van Veeldoeninge Gemeenskap Sentrums in Suid-Afrika maak finansiële volhoubaarheid moeilik, want die meerderheid Veeldoeninge Gemeenskap Sentrums bedien grootliks die historiese benadeelde gemeenskappe met hul beperkte finansiële hulpbronne. Dit is ook belangrik om te beklemtoon dat ekonomiese groei nie noodwendig armoede uitwissing impliseer nie, maar so eerder vaardigheidsontwikkeling (bv. Informasie Tegnologie). Veeldoeninge Gemeenskap Sentrums kan gemeenskappe transformeer, maar sal baie tydrowend wees en benodig gemeenskap deelname in alle sferes van regering en plaaslike gemeenskap.

Contents

	Page Nr.
List of Figures and Tables.....	8
List of Acronyms.....	10
CHAPTER 1: Introduction	
1.1. Introduction.....	12
1.2. Problem statement.....	13
1.3. Research methodology.....	15
1.4. Structure of assignment.....	17
CHAPTER 2: Local Economic Development and Multi Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs)	
2.1. Introduction.....	18
2.2. Aims and objectives.....	18
2.3. Definition of MPCC.....	19
2.4. Development communication and information approach.....	21
2.5. MPCC: Policy Framework.....	27
2.6. Economic development and Poverty alleviation.....	30
2.6.1. MPCCs as economic approach to poverty alleviation.....	32
2.6.2. The role of Human development.....	36
2.6.2.1. Community Empowerment.....	36
2.6.2.2. Community Participation.....	43
2.6.3. So what role does ICT play in poverty alleviation?.....	45
2.7. Sustainability of MPCC.....	47

2.8.	Conclusion.....	51
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CHAPTER 3: Case Study of the Dwars River region and major findings

3.1.	Introduction.....	53
3.2.	Aims and objectives	53
3.3.	Research method.....	54
3.4.	Demographic and socio-economical background.....	55
3.5.	Financial status and stages of development.....	58
3.6.	Development status and future outcomes of the Dwars River Valley MPCC.....	64
3.6.1.	Major findings.....	66
3.6.2.	Tourism strategy (major findings).....	78
3.7.	Conclusion.....	83

CHAPTER 4: Recommendations and Conclusions

4.1.	Introduction.....	84
4.2.	Aims and objectives	84
4.3.	Concluding remarks.....	84
4.4.	Recommendations	88

Bibliography	93 - 102
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Appendix.....	103 - 114
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List of Pictures, Figures, Tables and Appendix

Pictures

Photo 1: A view of the Dwars River Valley.....	55
Photo 2: Post Office at the MPCC in Pniel.....	59
Photo 3: Library at the MPCC in Pniel.....	59
Photo 4: Mobile clinic.....	60
Photo 5: Community hall at the MPCC in Pniel.....	60
Photo 6: MPCC offices in Pniel.....	61
Photo 7: Tourism Bureau at the MPCC offices.....	79

Figures

Figure 1: Links between Technological Change, Economic Development and Human Development.....	14
Figure 2: Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy.....	29
Figure 3: Role of Empowerment in Poverty Reduction.....	40
Figure 4: Sustainable Development Conceptual Framework.....	49
Figure 5: Different Role-players and Stakeholders in the MPCC Development.....	63
Figure 6: ICT model of the Dwars River Valley MPCC.....	73
Figure 7: Summary of major findings.....	87

Tables

Table 1: Results of the Unstructured questions.....67

Table 2: SWOT analysis of the Dwars River Valley.....68

List of Acronyms

CATT	- Community Access Task Team
COMTASK	- Task Group on Government Communications
CSIR	- Council for Scientific and Industrial Research
DEAT	- Department of Environmental Affairs and Tourism
DPLG	- Department of Provincial and Local Government
DRV	- Dwars River Valley
GCIS	- Government Communication and Information Centre
GEAR	- Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy
HSRP	- Human Settlement Redevelopment Program
ICT	- Information Communication Technology
IDP	- Integrated development Plan
ISP	- Internet Service Provider
ISRDS	- Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy
IT	- Information Technology
KPA	- Key Performance Areas
LED	- Local Economic Development
LEDF	- Local Economic Development Fund
MEC	- Member of the Executive Council
MPCC	- Multi Purpose Community Centre
NDA	- National Development Association

RDP	- Reconstruction and Development Programme
RSA	- Republic of South Africa
SWOT	- Strength, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats
UNDP	- United Nations Development Programme
VCSV	- Verenigde Christen Studente Vereniging
WSSD	- World Summit on Sustainable Development

Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Introduction

Local Economic Development (LED) strategies were initiated in South Africa from the late 1980s by business and civil society actors in the context of economic decline and the legitimacy crisis of the apartheid state. From mid 1990s, the government of national unity took over LED as part of its *developmental* approach to local government. It linked LED to the Reconstruction and Development Programme (RDP), emphasising a community economic development orientation. With the introduction of the Growth, Employment and Redistribution Strategy (GEAR) in 1996, economic development was also pursued through market-oriented strategies that emphasised enterprise development, investment promotion and small business development (DPLG, 2002). LED has tended to be pursued by different government departments and other actors in divergent ways that have fed into the fragmented and unsustainable development of the past period. There is presently a search for a more coherent approach to LED. This has been prompted by declining economic growth, rising unemployment and poverty.

In 1999, the Pniel municipality embarked on a project to enhance the economic viability of their region. Various projects were set out in their Integrated

Development Plan (IDP). The municipal elections of 2000 together with the merging of different municipalities caused the projects to stagnate. A lack of motivation and financial uncertainty, as well as differences of opinion amongst members of the Dwars River Valley community, caused the stagnation. Other problems experienced included the lack of community participation and empowerment.

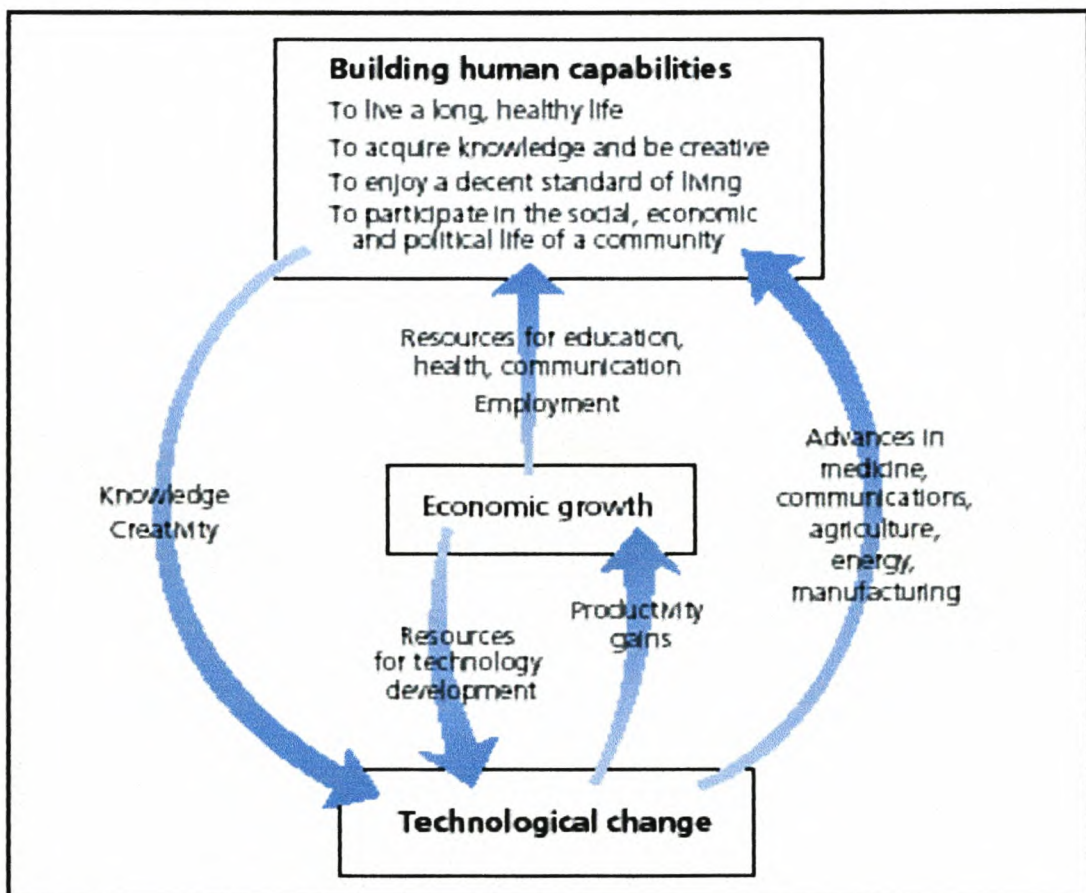
Recently the project, to enhance economic viability, has gained new interest and momentum as part of the national and provincial LED policy. One of the projects, which this study concentrates on, is the Dwars River Valley Multi-Purpose Community Centre (MPCC). Tourism development and sustainable environmental schemes form part of this development. Government funding from the Human Settlement Redevelopment Program (HSRP) and Local Economic Development Fund (LEDF) have already been allocated and the development process is underway.

1.3. Problem Statement

MPCCs can potentially contribute to improved economic development and poverty alleviation in the Dwars River Valley. However this outcome is dependent on successful community empowerment, community participation and an appropriate Information Communication Technology (ICT) policy.

Figure 1 below is an illustration of the links between technological change (MPCCs and ICT), economic development and human development (empowerment and participation).

Figure 1: Links between Technological Change (MPCCs and ICT), Economic Development and Human Development (Empowerment and Participation)



(Source: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 2001: 28)

According to Figure 1, **MPCCs** (as an example of technological change) can be classified as the vehicle for **economic growth** at local level. Economic growth

provides the resources for education, **communication and technology development**, which in turn helps to build human capabilities to live a healthy life; acquire knowledge; improve their standard of living; and **participate** in the social, economic and political life of the community (which also affects technological change). Technological innovation is an expression of human potential. In addition, **empowerment, participation** and access to material resources create conditions that encourage people's creativity. Thus, human development and technological advance can be mutually reinforcing, creating a virtuous circle.

It is important to establish whether these components (economic growth, poverty alleviation, ICT, participation and empowerment) are present and being optimally utilised by the Dwars River Valley MPCC; and, what the community's views are regarding these issues.

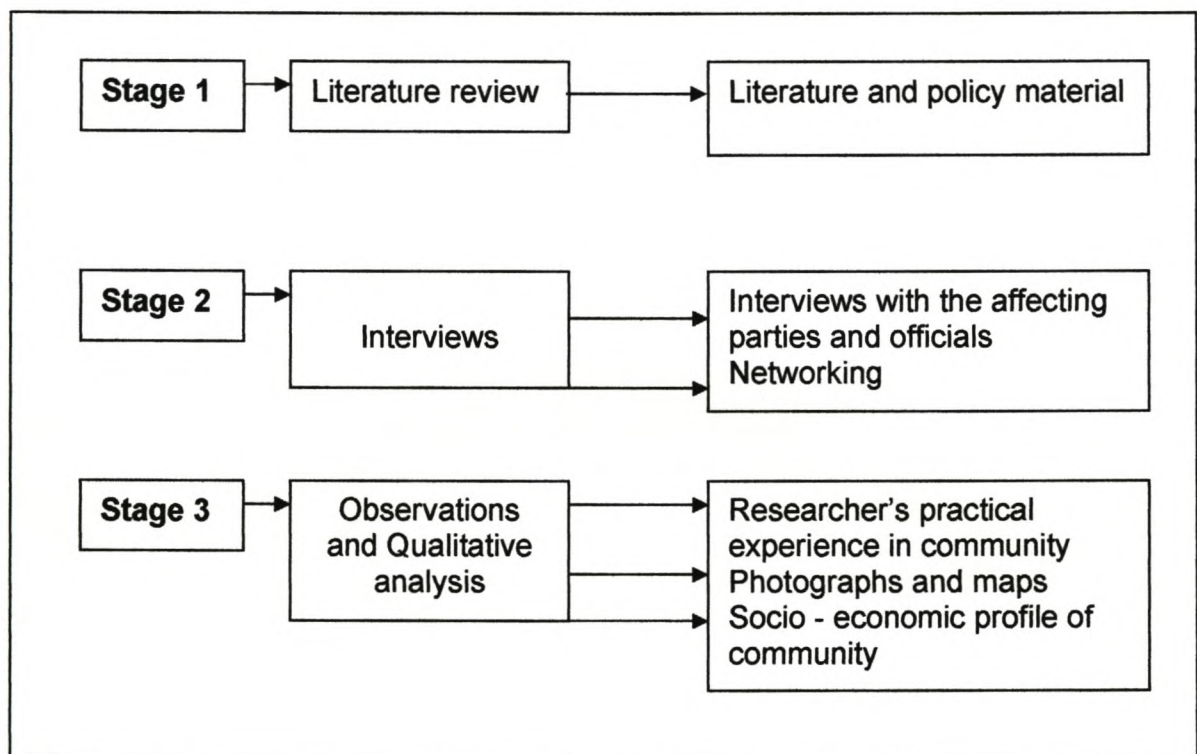
1.3. Research method

Firstly, I conducted a primary and secondary survey and reviewed the relevant literature on LED, ITC and MPCCs, human development (participation and empowerment), poverty alleviation and sustainability. Policy documents on these subjects were also examined.

Secondly, and most importantly, I conducted various studies in the Dwars River Valley and surrounding communities by means of interviews (structured and

unstructured) and observations (Chapter 3). These observations included proceedings of local government and community meetings (which were utilised to enable an unbiased assessment of the process). These proceedings included workshops, community meetings and occasional visits to the MPCC offices.

Thirdly, a qualitative analysis was used to investigate the socio-economic profile of the community.



1.4. Structure of Assignment

This assignment consists of four chapters. Each chapter contains a brief introduction, the purpose of the chapter and a conclusion.

Chapter 1 is a brief introduction of the assignment and includes the problem statement and research methodology.

Chapter 2 sketches the theoretical background needed to assess the practical experiences detailed in chapter 3.

Chapter 3 will focus mainly on the case study, namely Dwars River Valley MPCC.

Chapter 4 provides recommendations. The final concluding remarks accompany these recommendations.

Chapter 2

Local Economic Development (LED) and Multi Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs)

2.1. Introduction

In response to President Thabo Mbeki's State of the Nation Address (2001), the Minister of Public Service and Administration emphasised two themes; namely improved service delivery and transformation of the public service. The two themes clearly meant that both the standard and high quality of service delivery could be achieved through a responsive, transforming public service. This implies a need for transformation of processes, systems and channels of service delivery to cope with the challenges facing society in general. One such channel has been expressed through a dynamic and exciting government initiative; i.e. MPCCs.

2.2. Aims and objectives of this chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to establish the theoretical framework. *Firstly*, it is important to clarify how different authors and government agencies view MPCCs. *Secondly*, the establishment of MPCCs has largely been framed by the Information Technology and Communication approach. Therefore it is only fitting to address this approach in more detail. *Thirdly*, there will be an exploration of the policy framework that supports MPCCs. *Fourthly*, the assignment will explore how MPCCs - as an economic approach - contributes to poverty alleviation, since

MPCCs base their development on ICT. ICT can potentially improve public participation and community empowerment, which have become two of the most important human/social development approaches in the last two decades. Therefore, *fifthly*, focus will be on these two approaches. Sixthly, the role of ICT as poverty alleviation strategy is explored. Penultimately, an exploration of the community economic development orientation based on sustainability, keeping the two approaches in mind, is undertaken.

2.3. Definition of MPCC

According to Benjamin (1997), a MPCC is a structure which enables communities to manage their own development by providing access to appropriate information, facilities, resources, training and services. In all cases, the sharing of facilities amongst various service providers should improve cost effectiveness and efficiency.

These services can include:

- Community Information Centre
- Government Information One Stop Service Centres
- Training in, for example, computing, bookkeeping, office skills
- Community Resource centre
- Small Business Support

- Integrated delivery of a range of government services
- Related developmental and entrepreneurial services

Not all MPCCs will offer all these services. The services will depend on the needs and priorities of the community. Community involvement, ownership or control is fundamental to a MPCC. The MPCC should reflect the needs of the local stakeholders; i.e. representative organisations, individual residents, local authorities, business and appointed development agents, etc. There are various names for MPCCs, including Community Service Centres, Community Information Centres, Community Resource Centres, Telecentres, etc. Broadly, though, a MPCC “is an organisation offering a range of developmental services (including information services) to a specific community and with a large degree of community involvement” (Berlyn, 1996:3).

In South Africa, MPCCs have been identified as the primary approach for the implementation of development communication and information as they potentially offer a wide range of services that communities can use for their own empowerment. Furthermore, such a process of accessing services would allow for an improvement in the quality of service delivery in line with the *Batho Pele* principles guiding government delivery. These principles speak of ‘people-centered’ governance and place a high premium on client satisfaction and redress (Department of Public service and Administration, 1997). The meaning of client satisfaction and redress vary, depending on the specific community and

their needs. For the purpose of clarity, reference will be made to the local community and their need for sufficient information availability. In many instances, the importance of ITC, especially for the poor, is usually underestimated.

2.4. Development communication and information approach.

In 1996 Deputy President Thabo Mbeki established a Task Group on Government Communications known as ComTask. This group looked at inter-governmental communications; the structure of the media and government's relations with it; international communications; and, other aspects of governmental communications. The final report of ComTask (1996:3) stressed the need for improved two-way communication between government and citizens.

The ComTask report speaks of the great need to improve government communications and information to the majority.

“The disadvantaged communities in rural and urban areas of the South African society should be the main targets for an enhanced development information system. [They] have been deprived of information related to their economies, education, cultures and societies”(ComTask report, 1996: 3).

Running parallel to the official ministerial conference, the alternative ‘Empowering Communities in the Information Society’ conference (Berlyn, 1996), gathered

most of the practitioners emanating from civil society (i.e. non governmental organizations, academia, parastatals, labour unions, and civic associations). It was during this conference that the concept of 'Telecentres' as a basic unit to achieve Universal Service was developed. The passing of the Telecommunications White Paper (RSA, 1996) at that time made a definite commitment to establishing a Universal Service Agency. In this context, Community Access Task Team (CATT) put forward a programme to develop Telecentres, or our very own construct, the MPCC (Patel, 1998: 21).

The impact of the new Information and Communication Technology (ICT) approach is much debated in South Africa, particularly in the area of community development and linking government with citizens. Benjamin (1997) states that IT professionals need to learn the skills of librarians and development workers. In community development work, empowering the community is not simply a tactic to achieve some developmental goal; it is a large part of the goal itself. All communities already have information systems, though often informal and subtle, and therefore ignored by conventional information science. Any formalised information system should build on and respect the existing use of information in a community. Often libraries, schools and churches already have useful information stores and roles in the community that should become the base of more formalised information systems.

As such, the MPCC will become a focal point for development communication. It has to be a hub of activities, becoming vehicles through which communities are able to participate in the affairs of government.

According to the Government Communication and Information Centre (GCIS):

“The primary focus of development communication and information is to be on the poor and disadvantaged whose profile reflects not only a dearth of access to information, but also features as the main target of government socio-economic programs” (GCIS, 2000:4).

This Information and Communication approach is widely regarded as one that places communities and their experiences at the centre of the communication transaction. According to the GCIS (2000: 5), the following are a number of important reasons why the communication discipline is valuable to the development process:

- Communication is a tool, which allows practitioners to survey a new environment, especially by establishing consultative vehicles
- It deals with real people and their experiences – ‘I share my journey and ideas and you, yours’. In so doing communication is a process which raises consciousness and awareness amongst communities of issues pertaining to the improvement of the quality of life
- Communication is fundamentally a two-way process and can thus, if applied correctly, be a significant mechanism to promote feedback
- The approach can teach communities and those who would serve in those communities, new skills and offer insights into lived experiences they have never encountered before

Communication can be a powerful vehicle for nation building as its connection with the development process can sell the dream of a better life as an inspiration, and a commitment emanating from public policy.

Benjamin (1997) states that a major concern is whether the benefits of this will be felt by a small information elite, while leaving the majority in information poverty. This has led to the issue of Universal Access to ICT being at the centre of several government initiatives. As well as applications in education, health care and small business development, Universal Access to ICT could greatly improve the link between communities and government.

MPCCs are singled out as vehicles for allowing this information interaction to take place. These centres should be linked together through telecommunications networks. This is only one alternative in making MPCCs more sustainable. By sharing information between different MPCC satellites, government operations can be rendered more transparent and, consequently, securing the trust of the community. In many instances, however these government initiatives do not meet the information needs of the community. Benjamin (1997) explored the following two case studies of specific government initiatives:

- Johannesburg One Stop Service Centres

Johannesburg Metropolitan Council realised the need to bring its services closer to the community it serves through "One Stop Service Centres". Such centres

could range from a complaints or help service to a fully-fledged MPCC providing a range of services. The common denominator is providing an accessible infrastructure that could assist members of the community in dealing with enquiries, complaints and requests. It entails an attempt to break down the walls of bureaucracy in order to provide the community with a single point of access to services.

In June 1997, an information and complaints service desk was established within the property information centre. Part of this pilot is the establishment of a visible user-friendly information service, using an intranet computer facility for accessing information databases. This pilot will develop experience in integrated information and complaints systems, and store information frequently requested by clients. Many of the services could be offered on the Internet, and Johannesburg is one of the few South African cities to have a presence on the World Wide Web though primarily for tourist information and public relations, rather than community information.

- North-West Province Kiosks

The North-West Province was formed largely out of the former 'homeland' of Bophutatswana. It has a largely rural and poor population, with illiteracy at over 50%. In 1995, the Reconstruction and Development Programme Unit of the Office of the Premier started a pilot project to provide information to communities through touch-screen kiosks.

Six stand-alone (i.e. non-networked) touch screen computers were used. Various information was collected in digital form for these kiosks, including demographic and economic information on the province, main provincial programs and speeches of the Premier. The hardware and software was donated by a computer company as a pilot project, and the information was developed by the provincial government. These six kiosks featured in various community centres throughout the North-West, with a generally favourable reaction.

However, the project was not sustained and is now considered to have been a waste of money by the provincial government. The information provided was interesting, but did not really meet the needs of the community. The updating of information was not considered important. It served more as a public relations exercise than as a community service. This initiative was technology led, without sufficient attention devoted to real information needs, and operational and budgetary issues.

It is clear from these examples that government initiated these projects to improve information availability to the community. Unfortunately, government delivered unsustainable solutions. Therefore, it is important to investigate the policy documents which led to the establishment of MPCC, to clarify what the initiative is based upon. Policy documents normally clarify why such an initiative was started.

2.5. MPCC : Policy framework in South Africa

A number of policies have been critical in shaping the Government's Development Communication approach as well as the decision to implement the policy through MPCCs. Amongst the most important are:

- Comtask Report

The Communication Task Group report published in 1996 made 83 recommendations to government to overhaul its communication strategies and methods. Recommendation 65 was specific to the development of MPCCs in order for the public to access information as guided by section 32(1) (a) and (b) of the Constitution (Act No 108 of 1996).

- White Paper on Transforming Public Service Delivery (1997)

The government's approach to service delivery is that people should come first (Department of Public service and Administration, 1997). A guiding principle of the public service in South Africa is that of 'service to the people'. Batho Pele, like all other legislation and policies, must be referenced to the Constitution (Chapter 10, in particular) which also provides for the basic values and principles governing the country.

- Policy statement by the President (June 1999)

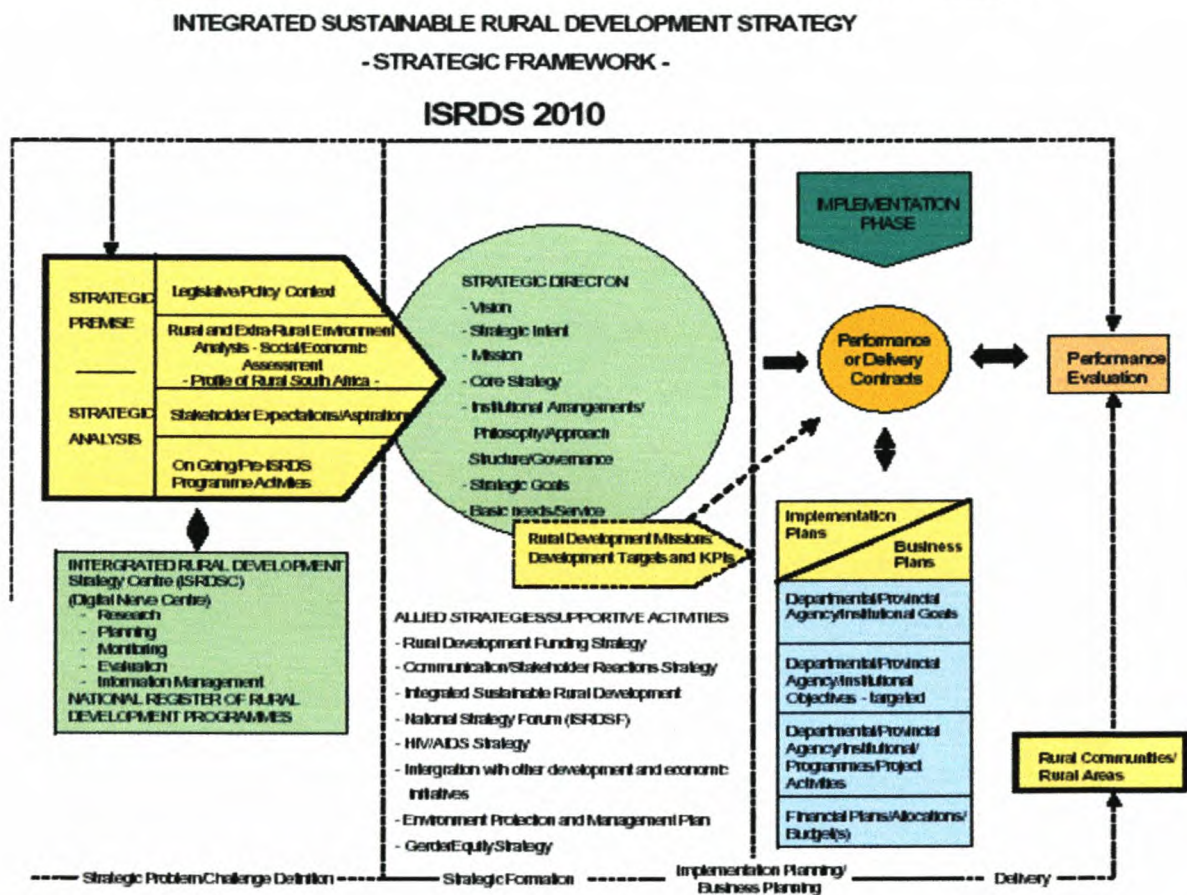
In his address at the opening of Parliament in June 1999, President Mbeki announced that the government was ready to implement an integrated and sustainable rural development strategy (ISRDS) (Mbeki, 1999). He also noted:

'The integration we seek must, for instance, ensure that when a clinic is built, there must be a road to access it. It must be electrified and supplied with water'. At this point it is important to note that the IRSDS serves only as a framework for MPCC. A process to involve national departments in the formulation of the IRSDS was followed and pilot areas (nodes) were targeted in the Northern Province, Eastern Cape and KwaZulu-Natal. Since then, government departments have initiated projects and programmes that target identified areas in the three provinces. The MPCC initiative has been developed within this framework; and MPCCs are seen as key institutions in the process of bringing services and information to areas identified in this programme (and targeted nodes) (GCIS, 2000: 10).

The stated vision of the IRSDS is "to attain socially cohesive and stable communities with viable, sustainable economies and universal access to social amenities, able to attract skilled and knowledgeable people, equipped to contribute to their own and the nation's growth and development" (DPLG, 2000: 2). This vision has specific implications for local government and local councillors. The IRSDS emphasises the importance of people's full involvement and ownership of development. People need to be mobilised not just to benefit from projects, but to be active participants in projects. 'The rural person should be a patriot who understands the importance of their contribution to developing the nation and improving the lives of their families and communities' (Wegerif, 2001 cited in Joseph, 2002: 19).

Rural development is seen as multidimensional, covering all sectors and aspects of the life of a community. Ultimately it must transform economic, social and political relations to enable rural people to end their poverty and improve their own lives. The following diagram is an illustration of the ISRDS strategic framework. From the diagram it is necessary to identify how MPCCs are integrated in this framework to impact on the rural livelihoods.

Figure 2: Integrated Sustainable Rural Development Strategy



(Source: RSA, 2000: 23)

In the 'Strategic Problem/Challenge Definition' stage (indicated in the green box above) there is clear reference made to the 'Integrated Rural Development

Strategic Centre' (ISRDC). This centre can be seen as a direct reference to an MPCC (namely the 'Digital Nerve Centre', better known as 'Telecentres').

- Cabinet Memorandum No.15 (November 1999)

The Cabinet Memorandum mandated the Government Communication and Information Center (GCIS, 1999: 12) to provide information to the public so that they become active participants in changing their lives for the better. The GCIS was to facilitate and co-ordinate the government's Development Communication initiative through the establishment of MPCCs. According to the policy, these MPCCs would be the main vehicle to provide information to the local community, empowering them to become active participants in the global world of information transfer.

2.6. Economic Development and Poverty alleviation

According to the World Bank (World Bank, 2000: 2-3), "poverty is pronounced deprivation in well-being", where well-being can be measured by an individual's possession of income, health, nutrition, education, assets, housing, and certain rights in a society such as freedom of speech. Poverty is a lack of opportunities, powerlessness, and vulnerability. Poverty is a multidimensional phenomenon requiring multi-dimensional policy and program interventions in order to improve the well-being of individuals and, hence, free them from poverty.

As mentioned in the Local Economic Development policy paper of February 2002 (DPLG, 2002: 28): 'The *linking role* played by an LED strategy ensures that land use planning at grassroots level really make a difference to the municipal IDP, and vice versa'. The LED policy paper (DPLG, 2002) argues that without alignment with respect to economic processes, and without a range of LED strategies that are fully committed to job creation, attacking poverty, environmental protection and gender equity as fundamental objectives, none of the policy thrusts will succeed. In addition, Johan Ackron (2003) stated: "LED is a way of doing things and not a thing to do".

Joseph (2002: 3) states that it is important to note that the *IDP process is a single, inclusive planning process* within which other processes must be located. LED, IT and human development principles must be fully integrated within the IDP. Indeed, if a municipality is being developmental and responding to local development problems, then it needs to establish a clear vision and objectives that tackle these issues. For example, poverty and unemployment remain two of the key challenges facing municipalities in South Africa. IDP objectives need to include targets for meeting these challenges. LED strategies can then be used to assist in meeting the objectives. The entire working of the municipality will need to become more integrated and more focused on developmental outcomes. Integration refers to a combination of strategies complementing each other. In the next section, this integration will be explored via economic development, human development and ICT.

2.6.1. MPCCs as economic approach to poverty alleviation

According to Heeks (1999: 8), MPCCs can help to address poverty. He states that bringing them to all poor communities would be a massive operation requiring huge diversion of investments and taking at least a generation. This process will require large ongoing subsidies to sustain these MPCCs in the midst of poverty. According to the World Bank (2000: 72), to reach poor people, most reforms must be accompanied by institutional support, investment in infrastructure, and complementary reforms at the micro level. New technologies can help, especially information technologies that break down some of the barriers of physical remoteness that many poor people face (see Appendix 1). Appendix 1 illustrates how new technologies can help small businesses provide the poor with employment; promoting core labour standards; and improving access to financial markets, especially through basic microfinance (World Bank, 2000: 72).

In addition, economic growth is crucial to the creation of opportunities. However, growth is not enough; the poor and the vulnerable may often not be able to benefit from growth, because they lack health, or skills, or access to basic infrastructure. Empowerment is crucial for the poor to take advantage of opportunities created by growth (World Bank, 2000: 2). Furthermore, well-functioning markets are important in generating sustainable growth and expanding opportunities for poor people because they rely on formal and informal markets to sell their labour and products, to finance their investments, and to

insure against risks. Market-friendly reforms cannot only deliver growth, but must also deliver benefits to poor people.

In the meanwhile, LED practitioners are struggling to find concrete ways to integrate their LED initiatives with explicit anti-poverty strategies. The problem is twofold. Firstly, conventional LED approaches simply assume that economic growth in itself is good and will automatically benefit the poor through increased economic opportunities and jobs. However, instead of reduced inequality, jobs often are shed and the nature of work changes from guaranteed employment to piecemeal contractual relations. Secondly, there is a lack of information and experience to formulate coherent local anti-poverty strategies from the perspective and capacities of local government. Given these factors, it is not surprising that the South African case studies demonstrate a pattern of LED interventions devoid of systematic approaches that aim to erode structural poverty in the given locality (Pieterse, 2000: 2-3).

Pieterse (2000: 3) states that LED is fundamentally about generating economic growth that is sustainable and rooted in the local economy. This is of course desirable for most localities and very few groups would contest this objective. However, economic growth does not unproblematically translate into poverty alleviation, and in fact strong economic growth can be accompanied with increasing inequality and poverty if focused in a few sectors and involves technologies that benefit small groups of people. It is for this reason that we need

to explore in greater detail whether LED can be geared to become part of an anti-poverty programme, and if so, how a municipality could potentially accomplish this.

In the LED Policy paper (DPLG, 2002), it is proposed that LED be turned into the lead sector in urban and rural regeneration. This policy proposal has generated an expectation that a post-GEAR policy shift may be possible, at least in the LED sphere. The policy document focuses attention on poverty alleviation in a way that leaves unexplored the question of economic growth and its role, especially over time, in employment growth and income generation – the prerequisites for sustained improvement in the lives of the poor. It also leaves largely unanswered the question of how to foster economic connections between poverty stricken areas (and their people) and economic opportunities. A further weakness with the approach is that it defines local government as the main driver of LED, when international experience suggests that local government is more effective as a facilitator or enabler than as a driver of LED (DPLG, 2002).

Joseph (2002: 7) adds that LED can also be regarded as a trend associated with globalisation. As the role of the nation-state within the economy is reduced, and as localities and communities experience differential impacts from globalisation, local responses emerge to local challenges. These global impacts cause poverty gaps to widen even further. According to Ted Trainer (1995), these are some of the effects of globalisation, affecting our markets and human development:

- *First*, markets have a very strong tendency to allocate scarce resources and products to the rich and to deprive the poor of resources they once had. In a market economy based mostly on supply or demand- and social justice is irrelevant - goods go to those who can bid most for them.
- *Second*, in a market economy there is a powerful tendency for development to be inappropriate to the needs of most people and of the environment. Investment will flow into those ventures likely to yield the highest returns. These are seldom the ventures that are most likely to produce what most people need.
- *Third*, when economic growth is made the supreme development goal, development will inevitably be inappropriate. The ventures most likely to add to the Gross Domestic Product will be those which maximise sales or business turnover. Again, selling to the highest bidder will yield more income to a firm and make the greatest contribution to the national income, and the tendency therefore will be for production and development not to focus on the supply of those items that are most needed or ecologically appropriate.
- *Finally*, economists in general have ignored some of the basic principles of sociology. Many sociologists would argue that market forces damage social cohesion and drive out desirable social relations.

Human development can not be viewed in isolation. Market forces have an impact on social cohesion. According to the World Bank (2003: 91), for local government to be an effective and sustainable driver of LED, the demand

generally has to be complemented by supply-side inputs (capacity building, information, and outreach). Balancing bottom-up identification of investments (MPCCs) with carefully selected supply-side inputs will enhance the prospects for equitable and sustainable services for poor people.

2.6.2. The role of Human Development

The World Bank (2000: 7) separates its anti-poverty activities into three groups: promoting opportunity (inter alia through ITC), facilitating empowerment and participation, and enhancing security. The World Bank (2000: 9) explains that poor people's participation and empowerment in policy making and performance monitoring at both state and community levels is crucial. Human development should address two important strategies, i.e. empowerment and participation.

2.6.2.1. Community Empowerment

Khosa (2001) argues that infrastructure and services prior to 1994 was meant to systematically empower the white minority population and the white dominated economy, and to disempower the majority of rural woman and the black population. At the heart of new infrastructure and service delivery is the desire to identify potential beneficiaries and to give them improved access to essential services. The benefits of the new infrastructure policies are, however, unevenly shared and pockets of those who do not have access to better and affordable infrastructure and services are likely to continue to organise, lobby, protest and even struggle for a better deal than what is provided. These service imbalances

can be regarded as the impact of the apartheid legacy. The LED policy paper (DPLG, 2002) states that these service interventions should benefit the disadvantaged population which include the elderly; woman and children; low-income people; people living in rural areas; the disabled; and those living with HIV/Aids. These vulnerable groups need to be included in government decision-making processes and their skills need to be developed. This can potentially contribute to community empowerment.

The word 'empowerment' has come to be diluted or co-opted even by opponents of redistribution. The central debates on empowerment in South Africa are about ways of interpreting different forms and consequences of empowerment or disempowerment. Khosa (2001) argues that the local conceptualisation of 'empowerment' is severely limited and calls for a new framework to overcome some of the weaknesses inherent in the existing empowerment frameworks. Empowerment is not just self-help involving local initiatives driven by civil society or the elite. Empowerment should be understood as a process consisting of three dimensions: the process of democratisation, co-ordination between governance and the community, and economic justice.

Empowerment has come to mean different things to different people. The World Bank (2000: 2-3) defines empowerment as follow:

"Empowerment means increasing the capacity of poor people to affect the decisions that have a bearing on their lives, by investing in them and by

removing barriers that they face to engaging in political, social and economic activities”.

John Friedmann (1992) has been one of the first scholars to provide a theoretical foundation of the concept ‘empowerment’ framed in the ‘politics of alternative development’. Friedmann (1992: 31) defines alternative development as

“... a process of social and political empowerment whose long term objective is to re-balance the structure of power in society by making state action more accountable, strengthening the powers of civil society in the management of its own affairs, and making corporate business more socially responsive”.

He also critically appraises the theoretical foundation of ‘empowerment’, by distinguishing between social, political and psychological empowerment.

- Social empowerment, argues Friedmann (1992; 1996), is about access to certain bases of household reproduction, such as a supportive life space, surplus time, knowledge and skills, social organisation, social networks, instruments of work and livelihood, and financial resources. For Friedmann (1992 cited in Khosa 2001: 3), poverty is a ‘state of disempowerment’ because ‘poor households lack the social power to improve the condition of their lives’.
- Political empowerment is about access of individuals and household members to the process by which decisions, particularly those affecting their

own future, are made. Friedmann (1996: 161-173) does not see political empowerment as the power to vote only, but also the power of voice and of collective action.

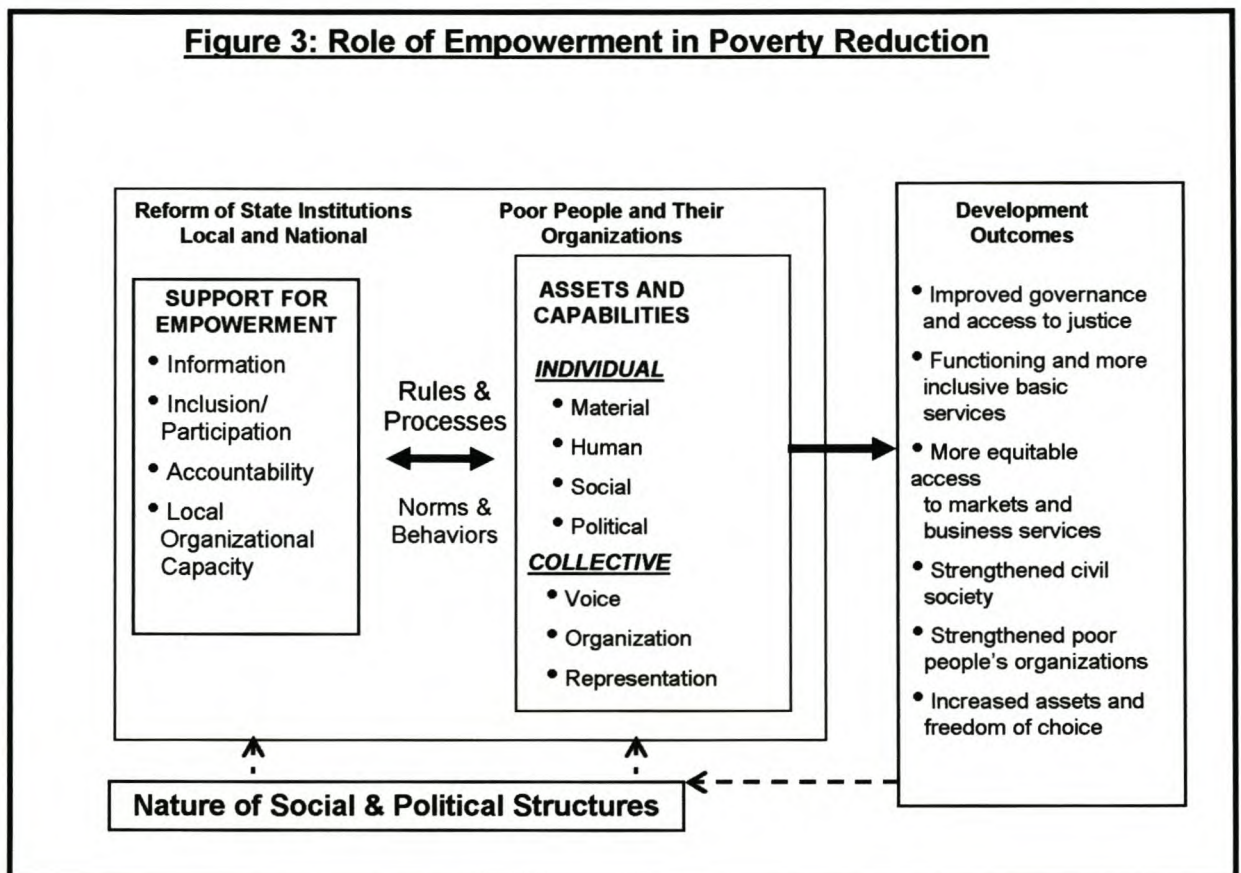
- Psychological empowerment is about the individual's sense of potency, which is largely a result of successful action in the social and political domains (Friedmann, 1992; 1996).

Furthermore, when distinguishing between social, political and psychological empowerment, it is apparent that these definitions place great emphasis on the poor, rural households and the disadvantaged. In the rush to deliver, government departments are ignoring the fact that many rural communities are unable to pay for the services provided, which is leading to collapse of projects around the country (*Mail and Guardian*, 25 March to 1 April 1999). In the first half of 2000, employment in the non-agricultural sectors of the economy has declined by 3% or by about 149,000 jobs. In the words of the quarterly report of the South African Reserve Bank,

“... the inability of the formal economy to create jobs in sufficient numbers to reduce unemployment remains a serious structural problem in the South African economy” (South African Reserve Bank, 2000: 14).

According to Joseph (2002: 10), unemployment and poverty alleviation remains two of the greatest challenges facing government. Furthermore, Joseph (2002: 2) states that unemployment rates of more than 20% are a national crisis that

requires bold action and concerned strategy. Nearly half of all South Africans (18 million) live below the poverty line (Joseph 2002: 10). In part, joblessness arises from the fact that we inherited a stagnant economy that has been mismanaged for over 25 years (Joseph 2002: 2). Figure 3 is an illustration of the role empowerment can play in poverty alleviation.



(Source: Narayan, 2002: 11)

In this illustration, local and national institutions are referred to as the supporters of empowerment. Furthermore, emphasis is placed on the poor and their possible contributions, based on individual and collective action. The figure illustrates that government and the poor should work together to attain the development outcomes required for a sustainable future. Aylwin (1998) correctly suggests that

small but powerful multi-national financial groups make important economic decisions that often result in disempowerment, dislocation and increased poverty for marginalised people. Put differently, what are the prospects of democracy in poor countries in the South as they encounter and contend with the dynamic and contradictory process of globalisation? Within this global world, more and more services are being decentralised to the poor. This can be seen as a strategy to improve the lives of those unable to access services on a day to day basis.

In contrast, from the neo-liberal perspective, empowerment involves decentralisation, that is, withdrawal of the state from areas of social life and from the economy, especially from labour market regulations. However, the problems of this approach has now been revealed even in advanced capitalist societies where inequality has increased; poverty has not disappeared and livelihoods have been negatively impacted by global forces (Khosa, 2001:9). Whereas the radical democratic interpretation maintains a vision of grassroots empowerment and radical social transformation, it finds it difficult to translate its vision into alternative political and economic institutions at the national level (Roberts, 1997: 316). According to Roberts, examples of this radical democratic initiative are the Employment Equity Act, the Skills Development Act and the establishment of the National Economic Development and Labour Council.

Furthermore, at the international conference on the economic empowerment of Southern Africa (held in September 2000), a set of practical interventions was

described by the participants which can be deployed as initiatives to develop MPCCs. This includes: (CSIR, 2000)

1. Establishment of logistical services as one of a range of services provided by rural multi-purpose centres, focussing particularly on freight collection/distribution services for incipient agro-forestry and tourism enterprises
2. The development of MPCCs and logistical services within the context of a periodic market system, giving particular attention to pension pay-out schedules, and the co-ordination of transport, periodic service provision and market schedules (including aspects such as routes, stopping places and service times)
3. Information provision, regulation and selective subsidisation in support of the co-ordinated schedules, centres and services, devoting particular attention to opportunities for transforming subsidised passenger transport services into 'omnibus' communications, transport and storage or exchange services
4. The exploitation of opportunities arising from the ongoing rapid advancements in ICT
5. Co-ordinated planning of 'linkage infrastructure' (ICT -, transport - and allied - nodal infrastructure) aimed at providing an appropriate, integrated infrastructure platform for rural logistical services, periodic markets and other nodal development activities
6. Capacity building of district councils and communities to undertake linkage development planning, establish public-private partnerships and/or issue contracts for the provision of integral rural logistical services

2.6.2.2. Community Participation

Of equal importance is the concept and practice of public participation. These two strategies of empowerment and participation go hand in hand as part of skills development projects, IT training and job creation, which could potentially lead to poverty alleviation in the long run. According to Joseph (2002: 14), many of the new municipalities are too large to allow the direct participation of all residents in complex planning processes. Participation and integrated development planning, therefore, needs clear rules and procedures specifying who is to participate or to be consulted, on behalf of whom, on which issue, through which organisational mechanism, and to what effect. All municipalities must promote public participation, but they also need to *create the conditions* for public participation, which should be done with regard to disadvantaged or marginalised groups in accordance with the conditions and capacities in a municipality.

The Constitution (1996) and the Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) clearly stipulates that the municipality must enable the involvement and commitment of its stakeholders by establishing an effective participatory process. In the case of stakeholder groups that are not organised, NGOs or other resource persons play a potentially critical role to campaign the interests of these groups.

Mashinini and de Villiers (2001: 66) state that sustainable development policies and strategies, in the context of rural regions in the Third World, entails sustainable agriculture, sustainable poverty alleviation activities, sustainable

human development, income generation activities, community empowerment through participation, and sustainable institutional change for capacity creation and building. While in the past communities and their participation were considered pillars for the success of sustainable development, sometimes communities themselves resist the changes in their lifestyles introduced by foreign/outside interventions, even where these are intended to improve their livelihoods and ensure sustainable resource management.

Attwood (2002: 25-26) explains that the notion of participation is central to many progressive and radical approaches to research and development. Participation means 'ownership, that is, a responsible agency in the production of knowledge and improvement of practice'. The World Bank sourcebook on Participation (2000:145) states that many cultural, economic, and political barriers effectively prevent the poor from having any real stake in development activities. Without special efforts by the designers and sponsors of projects and without appropriate policies to address and overcome these obstacles, the voices of the poor will not be heard. Reaching the poor, therefore, requires working with them to learn about their needs, understanding how development decisions are made in their communities, and identifying institutions and mechanisms that can place opportunities and resources into their hands.

2.6.3. So what role does ICT play in poverty alleviation?

The UNDP (2001: 3) assumes that the market is a powerful engine of technological progress - but it is not powerful enough to create and diffuse the technologies needed to eradicate poverty. Technology is created in response to market pressures - not the needs of poor people, who have little purchasing power. Nevertheless, technologies are tools of human development that potentially enable people to increase their incomes, live longer, be healthier, enjoy a better standard of living, participate more in their communities and lead more creative lives (UNDP, 2001: 27). Throughout history, technology has been a powerful tool for human development and poverty reduction and people often assume that access to technological innovations (more effective medicine or transportation, the telephone or the Internet) is gained once income increases. This is true - economic growth creates opportunities for useful innovations to be created and utilised.

The UNDP (2001: 27) argues with the view that technology is a reward of development, making it inevitable that the digital divide follows the income divide. As incomes rise, people gain access to the benefits of technological advance. The UNDP (2001: 28) states that the process can also be reversed: investments in technology, like investments in education, can equip people with better tools and make them more productive and prosperous. Technology is a tool, not just a reward, for growth and development.

The Internet, the wireless telephone and other information and communications technology enable people to communicate and obtain information in ways never before possible, dramatically opening up possibilities to participate in decisions that affect their lives. Information and communications technology can provide rapid, low-cost access to information about almost all areas of human activity while enabling and increased local participation. Even though developing countries may gain especially high rewards from new technologies, they also face especially severe challenges in managing them.

According to Heeks (2002: 17), the poor lack, and need, information of relevance to their local context to increase management success. He emphasise that this may come more from interaction between communities and community members rather than from the typical ICT-based pattern of data transfer. Interaction principles should be clearly stipulated in the IDP of that region. The IDP should be optimally utilised to provide information to the poor. Community meetings and workshops are good examples of this. Based on both overt and social resourcing, such new information will best be delivered to the poor by organic information systems that arise from within a community. Failing that, due to a lack of access, information may be better delivered by literate or intermediate technologies - such as telephones - than by ICT. Where ICT is used, it should provide a supplement, not substitute, to existing information systems. Communities isolated in rural areas, illiterate and living in poverty, will probably appreciate a pamphlet more than a laptop computer (assuming that they can read).

In support, the typical difficulties of mounting effective public information campaigns are compounded by high rates of illiteracy in some countries and the lack of a tradition of public empowerment and of consumer activists demanding information and asserting their right to know (UNDP, 2001: 73).

2.7. Sustainability of MPCCs

Sustainability requires growth; people's commitment and ability to support activities; sound environmental practice; and, institutionalisation of development activities, particularly at the local government level. Integration of programmes around a common vision is seen as essential to the success of rural development. Achieving these goals requires a clear strategy from the vision to the mechanisms for planning and co-ordination, especially financial components.

Benjamin (1998: 12) speaks to the sustainability of an MPCC:

‘it not only refers to the profitability of the economic venture, but it should refer to the value it has for the community and the long-term effect they will experience from their own efforts’.

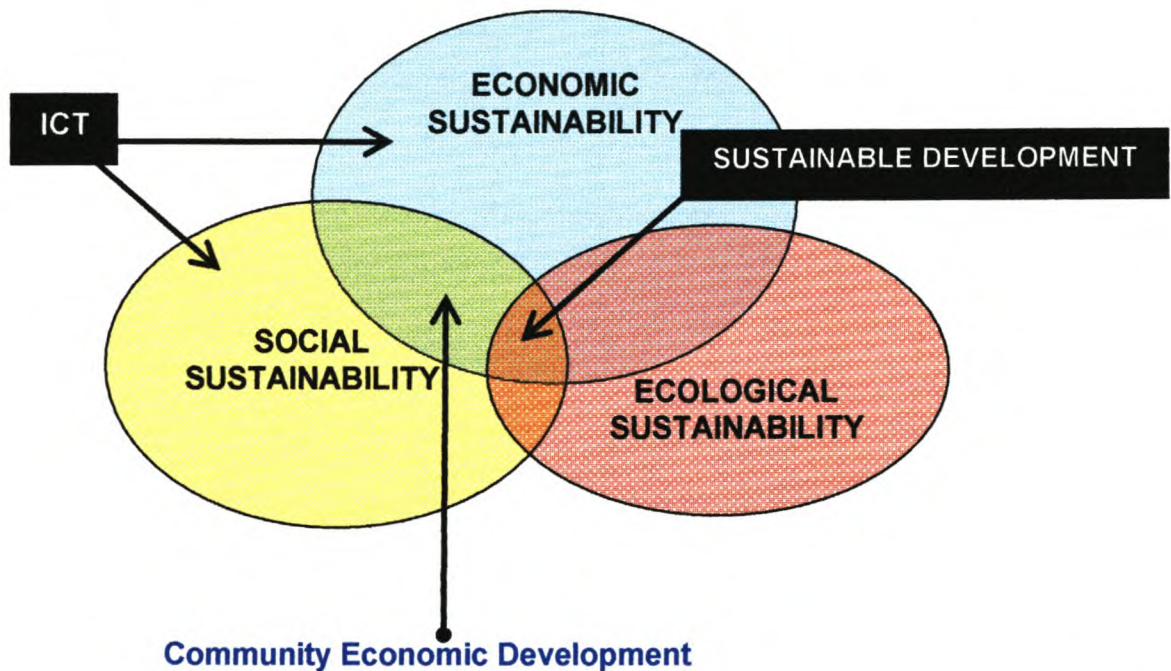
According to Benjamin (1998: 12), the key elements for the sustainability of MPCCs according to him are:

- *Capacity Building*: The presence of well trained government staff in an MPCC helps build capacity in the communities via skills transfer. These are enhanced through access to technology and training to utilise the new

technologies for exploiting opportunities in the job market or for self-employment.

- *Management of MPCCs:* MPCCs need well trained management staff capable of co-ordinating activities of service providers housed in MPCCs (both government and non-government). MPCC management will add to the sustainability of the centers by providing security measures, administration and reception services as well as guidelines for centre operations.
- *Integrated approach to service delivery:* Sustainability will be enhanced through shared resources and the reduction and eventual elimination of duplication of efforts. Most government departments have in their budgets funds for community focused activities such as in labour centres, arts and culture centres, community post offices, and so on; while other departments have funds for infrastructure rehabilitation and development. All these could be utilised in the MPCC initiative in various forms.

Even though various explanations exist in South Africa on participation, empowerment and poverty alleviation, government (at national, provincial and local level) still needs to provide clarity on the modalities of implementation. This is vitally important because community profiles and characteristics differ and universal development principles can not be applied to every community. Figure 4 illustrates a summary of what sustainability entails. This illustration combines the economic, social and environmental principles required for sustainability and inevitably also for MPCCs.

Figure 4: Sustainable Development Conceptual Framework

(Source: DEAT, 2002: 4-5)

In this figure community economic development is indicated by the green area. It is formed by the overlapped economic sustainability (blue area) and social sustainability (yellow area). Within figure 4, the position of ICT is illustrated. All these components (as illustrated in figure 4), are required for a LED project to be potentially successful. Therefore, explanations of these components are required:

- Economic sustainability includes economic viability and integrity which focuses on economic growth that is viable and fair, and which occurs at a rate which does not exceed the ability of natural and social systems to support this growth. **ICT** can be used as an economic source to increase information availability to the community. This will contribute to skills

development, increasing entrepreneurship, leading to self reliance of the community

- Social sustainability includes social justice and equity. These two elements stress **community participation and empowerment**, paying particular attention to the most vulnerable people in society. It supports the **use of appropriate technology**, and meeting people's basic needs without degrading ecological systems
- Ecological sustainability includes the conservation of biodiversity and the maintenance of ecological integrity. Ecological sustainability requires limiting the use of natural resources to a level that allows nature to regenerate resources, and minimising the use of non-renewable resources. It aims at reducing the amount of waste and pollution that is released into the system, and so does not over-extend the carrying capacity of the global sinks such as the oceans and atmosphere. It recognises the intrinsic value of the natural environment (DEAT, 2002: 4-5)
- Community economic development is a combination of economic -and social sustainability. Combining these two components automatically shifts the attention to local community based development. This shift implies the local need for skills development and increased entrepreneurship combined with improved community empowerment and participation

2.8. Conclusion

This chapter focused on the views and insights of different professionals within the field of this study together with different strategies and approaches. It is clear that government is still searching for solutions to problems that cannot be solved by economic growth alone. The MPCC strategy is based on using ICT as the main approach to improve economic conditions. Benjamin (1997) argued: "that a major concern is whether the benefits of this will be felt by small information elite while leaving the majority in information poverty". Two examples of Johannesburg and North West illustrated how the ICT provided, did not really meet the needs of the community. According to Heeks (1999: 8), MPCCs can help to address poverty, but the UNDP (2001: 3) assumes that the market is a powerful engine of technological progress - but it is not powerful enough to create and diffuse the technologies needed to eradicate poverty. Technology is created in response to market pressures - not the needs of poor people, who have little purchasing power.

According to the World Bank (2000: 72), to reach poor people, many reforms need to be accompanied by institutional support, investment in infrastructure, and complementary reforms at the micro level. Economic growth is crucial to the creation of opportunities. However, growth is not enough; the poor and the vulnerable may not be able to benefit from growth, because they lack health, or skills, or access to basic infrastructure. Empowerment and participation is crucial for the poor to take advantage of opportunities created by growth (World Bank,

2000: 2). The LED policy document (DPLG, 2000) focuses attention on poverty alleviation in a way that leaves unexplored the question of economic growth and its role, especially over time, in employment growth and income. Although IDP is potentially an important tool for integrating these concerns into planning and decision-making at the local level, there are a number of challenges that need to be addressed. Limited resources and low levels of capacity of many local authorities are such constraints (DEAT: 2000:1). These constraints also include a lack of community participation and empowerment. Chapter 3 focuses on the practical application of the findings in this chapter, to the Dwars River Valley MPCC Development Initiative.

Chapter 3

Case Study of the Dwars River Region and Major Findings of the Multi Purpose Community Center Initiatives

3.1. Introduction

The Municipal Systems Act (RSA, 2000) stipulates that municipalities have a constitutional mandate to promote social and economic development. This mandate requires municipalities to review their infrastructure and service delivery processes; improve their administrative efficiency and effectiveness; review policy and legislation; and, develop innovative ways of stimulating, supporting and attracting business. In order to implement this mandate, municipalities identify strategies and projects that require financial support. The Dwars River Valley (DRV) MPCC is one such project and is based on the principles and goals of job creation, empowerment and poverty alleviation.

3.2. Aims and objectives of this chapter

The purpose of this chapter is to profile the Dwars River Valley and the contribution of the MPCC to poverty alleviation and economic development. *Firstly*, a demographic and socio-economic description of the Dwars River Valley is furnished. *Secondly*, there is a focus on the financial capabilities of the region based on its past and current status. *Thirdly*, a exploration of the current status of the development is provided, based on the major findings gathered from the

interviews, questionnaires and observations. The major findings are summarised in tables. These major finding includes a summary of the Dwars River Valley MPCCs contribution to poverty alleviation and economic development. The role of ICT will be clarified. Lastly, the Tourism development strategy of the Dwars River Valley, which forms a crucial component of the MPCCs local economic development programme, is evaluated.

3.3. Research method

Stage 1 comprised a literature review, which included newspaper articles and MPCC business reports as well as literature compiled by the MPCC project manager and the Stellenbosch municipality.

Stage 2 centred on interviews. Various interviews were held with officials (see Appendix 2 for the interview questions) and members of the community. These officials included the Project Manager and various local government officials of the Stellenbosch municipality directly involved in the MPCC. Other officials included those serving on the different committees in the Dwars River Valley region. The interviews assumed a structured and unstructured form. Moreover, about fifteen structured questionnaires (see Appendix 3) were sent to community leaders of each region in the Dwars River. Those questioned were asked if they could be telephonically contacted again if further information was required. They all answered yes. Unstructured interviews were conducted with community members who visited the municipal administration office in Pniel – the location of the MPCC. People normally visit this building to make use of the pension payout

point, the post office, the mobile clinic (on Thursdays) and the library. All the community meetings are held at the banquet hall located in the MPCC. About 30 people were interviewed in an unstructured manner (see Appendix 4 for the list of unstructured questions). People expressed their views more freely because of the informal atmosphere. I stopped every second person and asked them questions. In some instances people supplied their names. Stage 3, recorded the observations of the interviewer – this included community meetings and observing proceedings at the MPCC offices, during their day to day activities.

3.4. Demographic and socio-economical background

The first known history of the area is that Pniel originated from the farms Good Hope and Paper Molen. The first church in the area was the Moravian missionary. In 1834, the United Congregational Church was inaugurated. The church is still the only one in the area. If you were not a member of the church,



Photo 1: A view of the Dwars River Valley

you had to leave the community. No other denominations were allowed (DRV MPCC, 2002: 3). Pniel is a rural area, proclaimed in terms of The Rural Areas Act (House of Representatives), 1987 (Act No 9 of 1987) (cited in DRV MPCC, 2002: 3). These so called “coloured rural areas” were spread over most of South Africa. These areas had their own diverse history and character like the 55ha Pniel rural area near Stellenbosch (see Photo 1 for a view of the Dwars River Valley’s beautiful landscape). In all probability, the rural areas were not the result of deliberate government actions to create ‘coloured reserves’, but they rather came into being due to diverse historical reasons (DRV MPCC, 2002: 3). These include:

- ‘Tickets of Occupation’ or ‘Certificates of Reservation’ issued by the British Colonial Authority - upon request of the Nama population and missionaries in Namakwaland - to protect tenure rights of inhabitants against “Trekboere”; or
- Individual tenure rights (Oppermansgronde); or
- Started by missionaries (Genadendal); or
- Due to land allocation policy (Eksteenskuil)

The land in Pniel belonged to the church, up until 1994. The land was transferred to the state, to be held in a trust for the community.

The Dwars River Valley is a diverse community consisting of about 12 000 people. This community has great value for their church, culture, heritage and

sport. Many people in this community are self-employed. Many people in this community over the years excelled on the sports field or academically. Crime in this community is minimal. In this community, there are different political values and beliefs.

The Dwars River Valley consists of different communities, working together on an overall plan to develop the area (see Appendix 5 for the map of the Dwars River Valley in relation to surrounding areas. The MPCC office is located in Pniel). The different communities are:

- Banhoek farms
- Kylemore
- Johannesburg
- Pniel
- Lanquedoc
- Groot Drakenstein (which includes the farms in the area)
- Uilkraal (predominantly a black community)
- Meerlust
- Meerrust
- Simondium

It is believed that Pniel was the first community established along the slopes of the Simonsberg and on the banks of the Dwars River. Lanquedoc was built for farm workers and is the property of the Rhodes Fruit Farms, which was later sold

to the Anglo American Corporation. In Lanquedoc, the Anglo American Corporation is currently busy building houses for farmworkers. Lanquedoc in itself is a historic town because of the Herbert Baker architecture (DRV MPCC, 2002: 3). The different communities – listed above – fall under the Municipality of Stellenbosch.

The characteristics mentioned above, gives an indication of the rich nature of the Dwars River Valley. In this region, there are resources (like the mountains, rivers, the history, etc.) that can be utilised to enhance the quality of life for the community. The Dwars River Valley community and the local government chose to enhance the region by establishing a MPCC. This decision was accompanied by the recognition of the financial aid, sustainable planning and effective community participation needed.

3.5. Financial status and stages of development

The Business Plan for Community Tourism Development in the Dwars River Valley indicated that the former Pniel Transitional Council submitted an application to the Department of Provincial and Local government (DPLG) for Local Economic Development (LED) funding. An amount of R500 000 was awarded In September 2000 for the establishment of a Youth Centre in Pniel. In November 2001, a further application with a revised business plan (and extended scope) was made to the Human Settlement Redevelopment Programme (HSRP)

wherein a financial mix of LED and HSRP funding (totalling R2 million) was proposed. The business plan for this proposal suggested two phases:

Phase 1: Establishing the MPCC

- Alterations to an existing building for conversion into a municipal pay-point, help desk, pension pay-out, post office (Photo 2), tourism bureau, library (Photo 3), clinic (Photo 4).



Photo 2: Post Office at the MPCC offices



Photo 3: Library at the MPCC in Pniel



Photo 4: Mobile clinic (they visit the MPCC on Thursdays)

- Proposals for extensions to building to house training rooms, workshops and business rooms
- Project management, the rendering of professional services at the MPCC office and the organising of community gatherings. Community meetings are held at the community hall (Photo 5) also situated at the MPCC office



Photo 5: Community hall at the MPCC in Pniel

- Phase 1 also includes the training of specific personnel, the appointment of a centre manager and the creation of a Trust to manage the centre (see Appendix 6 for organogram of the Trust and the members)
- The procurement of equipment for specific training and workshops (see Photo 6). The office contains 12 computers and various IT equipment available to the MPCC members and the community (see Appendix 7 for the layout plans of the MPCC).



Photo 6: MPCC offices in Pniel

Phase 2: Extensions of facilities

The original business plan proposed the following:

- Training
- Generating a Tourism development plan
- Creation of 30 small businesses and up to 3000 employment opportunities
- Training small irrigation farmers

- Building of a Tourism bureau; arts and craft centre; overnight and conference facilities; development of an industrial hive; and establishing a sports academy.

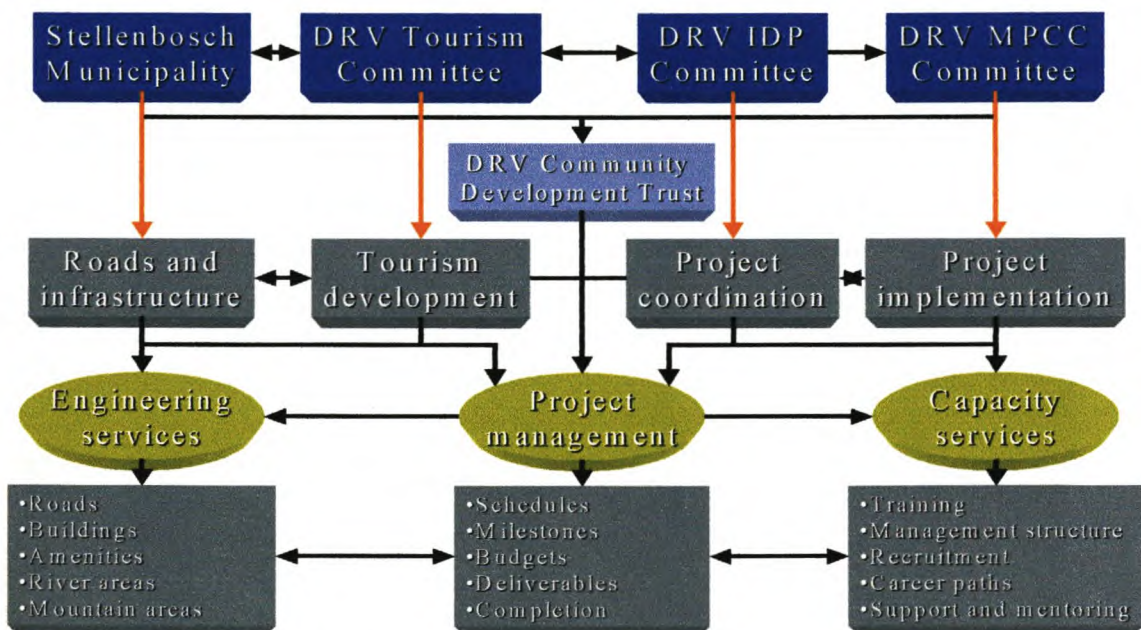
Before funding was finalised or deployed, the Pniel Council was absorbed into the Stellenbosch municipal region in the new demarcation of local authorities. At the same time, the LED fund granted another R300 000 to the same project. After the amalgamation, members of the other villages in the Dwars River Valley petitioned Stellenbosch municipality to be included in the planning of the Youth Centre. As a result, a new committee, consisting of representatives of 6 villages was formed. The MPCC Committee handled the planning from this point onwards. Furthermore, the Integrated Development Plan (IDP) committee is the umbrella body which co-ordinates all development actions in the Dwars River Valley. This committee was initiated by the Stellenbosch Municipality, as mandated by local government, to drive local economic and social development. The IDP committee plays an important role in the operation and budgeting of the MPCC.

One of the main features about the integrated development planning process is the involvement of the community and stakeholders through various structures. Community participation ensures that the IDP addresses the real issues affecting the citizens of a municipality. A strategy needs to be drafted in line with national and provincial guidelines and in collaboration with the Boland District

Municipality. Municipalities are too large to allow the direct participation of all residents. Even though the IDP documents sets clear principles for participation, there still remains many cultural, economic, and political barriers effectively preventing the poor from having any real stake in development activities. Sometimes communities themselves resist the changes in their lifestyles introduced by outside interventions and projects.

The community should be seen as the major role player when planning an IDP. Figure 5 is an illustration of the position of the different role-players and stakeholders in the MPCC development.

Figure 5: Different Role-players and Stakeholders in the MPCC Development



(Source: DRV Tourism Planning Committee presentation on the 11-03-2003 cited in DRV MPCC, 2003: 28)

Participation in the development of the IDP (Stellenbosch IDP, 2002/2003: 9) serves the following functions:

- Needs orientation: ensuring that people's needs and problems are taken into account
- Appropriateness of solutions: using the knowledge and experience of local residents and communities in order to arrive at appropriate and sustainable problem solutions and measures
- Community ownership: mobilising local residents' and communities' initiatives and resources, and encouraging co-operation and partnerships between municipal government and residents for implementation and maintenance.

3.6. Current status and future outcomes of the Dwarsrivier Valley MPCC

This section consists of an exploration into the current status and planning of the MPCC with emphasis on the weaknesses and successes. Furthermore, the role of ICT will be clarified. This section focuses on how the Dwars River MPCC can potentially contribute to poverty alleviation and economic development, as according to the views of the community. Lastly, the Tourism strategy (Phase 2) will be discussed.

A service provider with experience in establishing MPCCs¹ was appointed in September 2002 to drive the LED funded project. Through a series of workshops

¹ Mr. Uys du Buisson, (DIGIMILE [Pty] Ltd), the Project Manager. Formerly employed at the Council for Scientific and Industrial Research (Cape Town).

during the first month, consensus was reached and the project plan for the establishment of the MPCC was formulated. All participantsⁱ were taught computer skills, which was followed by specific training of various specialist groups, including:

- Business advisors
- Project managers
- Content creators
- Technical support people

In the Business Plan compiled by the service provider, there were comments made on the involvement of the community in the projects of the DRV:-

‘They (the community) will act as the implementation agents in the project and ensure direct community involvement and commitment, not only in the role-out, but also in the maintenance’.

The Plan states further:

‘... community members will manage and work in these businesses, creating job opportunities and income potential for many people who are unemployed’ (DRV MPCC, 2002: 2). According to community input and interviews, there is a gap between these statements and reality.

After weekly facilitation sessions with the Project Committee, which started in July to September 2002, community members were given the opportunity to

² The participants are people residing in the Dwars River Valley. They were identified at community meetings.

apply to be recruited to various programs relating to ICT. A group was recruited, interviewed and selected (at the beginning of October 2002); training commenced on the 7th October and was completed on the 17th January 2003.

3.6.1. Major findings

From the interviews (structured and unstructured) conducted with the 30 community members and 15 community leader (see Appendix 3 for questionnaire and Appendix 4 for unstructured questions) and 5 officials (Appendix 2 for the questionnaire), it was clear that there were mixed opinions about the MPCC in terms of its construction, location, funding and effectiveness. Whilst there is considerable positive commentary from Pniel residents; negative responses were recorded from residents of other regions in the DRV. Three of the member's (who completed the questionnaires) were further questioned per telephone. I required more information on the role of ICT in the Dwars River Valley community.

Table 1 serves as a summary of the results gained from the unstructured line of questioning. The questions will be numbered from 1 to 13 (see Appendix 4 for questions) and refer to the 30 community members questioned. The questions required a 'Yes', 'No' or 'Uncertain' answer. The structured interviews (Appendix 2) and the questionnaires (Appendix 3) will not be summarized in table format due to their descriptive nature.

Table 1: Results of the unstructured questions

QUESTION	YES	NO	UNCERTAIN	<i>Total People</i>
1. Familiar with MPCC	20	10	0	30
2. MPCC is necessary	13	7	10	30
3. Would take part in projects at MPCC	13	2	15	30
4. Make use of services provided at MPCC (ICT)	2	28	0	30
5. ICT improves development in DRV	5	7	18	30
6. Other access to technology	20	10	0	30
7. MPCC is effectively located	16	9	5	30
8. Attend community meetings	10	20	0	30
9. Enough opportunities created for participation	10	11	9	30
10. Improvements in region since MPCC	17	10	3	30
11. MPCC will be successful	9	7	14	30
12. Economic changes since start of MPCC	6	15	9	30
13. MPCC contributed to poverty alleviation	9	11	10	30

(Source: Unstructured Interviews, 2003)

What follow is a discussion of the views of communities and officials about the strengths and weaknesses of the Dwars River Valley. Secondly, there is a focus on the financial sustainability of the development initiative. Thirdly, there is a discussion of the different services provided at the MPCC. Fourthly, a critique

about the location of the MPCC is furnished. Fifthly, there is a brief description of the management strategy of the MPCC. Lastly, the role of community participation and empowerment in this initiative is discussed. This section will be followed by an overview of the Tourism strategy as the key development intervention (next to ICT) in the Dwars River Valley.

- **Strengths and weaknesses**

The majority of the Dwars River Valley (DRV) sees the development of tourism as offering considerable potential. They see a lack of community support of projects, meetings and development as the most significant weaknesses. At the strategic planning workshop that was conducted at the Stellenbosch Municipality, the MPCC committee drafted the following SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the Dwars River Valley (MPCC, 2003). The opinions of the community were incorporated into Table 2.

Table 2: SWOT analysis of the Dwarsrivier Valley

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>The MPCC and tourism project has municipal support</p> <p>Everybody lives close to the river and is familiar with it</p> <p>The river is relatively clean</p>	<p>The shared vision does not exist yet</p> <p>There are no maintenance and sustainability plans at present</p> <p>The community members involved in the project do not have enough experience to</p>

The capacity to carry out plans exists	implement the project effectively
The river can be developed for tourism	Lack of skilled leaders to educate the unskilled community members
Opportunities	Threats
Creation of businesses and jobs in the community	Opposition from the community about the use of the funding
Pay for services provided by the MPCC	Not enough access control over the river
One owner (Anglo American) can provide permission for access to the entire opposite bank of the river	Private ownership of the river bank
Greater opportunities for ownership of development projects in the valley	Anglo may sell large properties in the valley
The river must be managed	Floods and droughts
	There is a lack of community participation

(Source: Dwars River Valley (MPCC, 2003) and Interviews (2003))

According to Mr. Cysters, from Planning and Economic Development (Stellenbosch Municipality), the weaknesses the DRV experiences includes insufficient funding; diverse communities isolated by 'boundaries' within the region; communities (e.g. Kylemore, Lanquedoc, and Groot Drakenstein) are far from the MPCC; and, Anglo American owns the majority of land with further developments being hampered by isolation. The strengths of the DRV, according to Mr Cysters, indicate that it is a beautiful tourism region; the road leads people through the winelands and past the historic churches; and, the river supplies

irrigation water to the farms and serves as tourist attraction for campers (Interview, 2003).

- **Financial sustainability**

Mr. A. Cysters stated that: '...the R1 million received from the Local Economic Development Fund (LEDf) was used for training, participatory measures and for the creation of the committee'. He also stated that the MPCC initiative received a further R1.5 million from the Human Settlement Redevelopment Program (HSRP) (Interview, 2003). An amount of R750 000 was used for Phase 1. Thereafter, national government claimed they did not comply with the KPA (Key Performance Areas) and withdrew further funding. Mr Cysters and Mr Du Buisson (Project Manager) applied for funds from the NDA (National Development Association). The application was temporarily approved and an amount of R900 000 was set aside. This funding will also be used for training and tourism.

Mr. P. de Jager, a resident of Groot Drakenstein stated that the financial situation should be more transparent. The community was aware of the R1.5 million the MPCC received (see Appendix 8 for Newspaper Articles). He further mentioned that of the R1.5 million received, R200 000 is left, to be used for the construction of the centre. People are wondering what happened to the rest, because they have not seen any significant results (Interview, 2003). Many of the community members I met at the MPCC said they saw the newspaper article but cannot

recollect where the money went. Therefore it is apparent that people need to see tangible results.

- **Services (e.g. ICT)**

Mr. P. de Jager is also involved with the Worcester MPCC. He stated: 'Computers play an important role in our life. The problem with the computer training at the MPCC is that it includes only a small portion of the DRV. Communication with the municipality is not well'; and 'the community felt the MPCC should have provided more facilities for health services or a HIV facility' (Interview, 2003). I asked Mr. E. van der Merwe and Mr. P. Carstens (from the Planning and Economic Development – Stellenbosch Municipality) how the MPCC and municipality plan to utilise their ICT technology. They noted that the MPCC established a database with names of people who are unemployed in the DRV. These participants paid five rand each for their names to be kept on this database. Whenever the MPCC requires support they extract the workers from this database (Interview, 2003).

The MPCC is mainly an information hive which supports ICT, but many of the community members feel that the centre is under-utilised. Table 1 indicates that the majority of the community members were uncertain whether ICT will make a difference in the DRV. Mr. R. Muller, IT manager at the Stellenbosch Municipality (Interview, 2003), indicated that there is no direct ICT policies addressing community based technology strategies. However, the Municipality has a Data

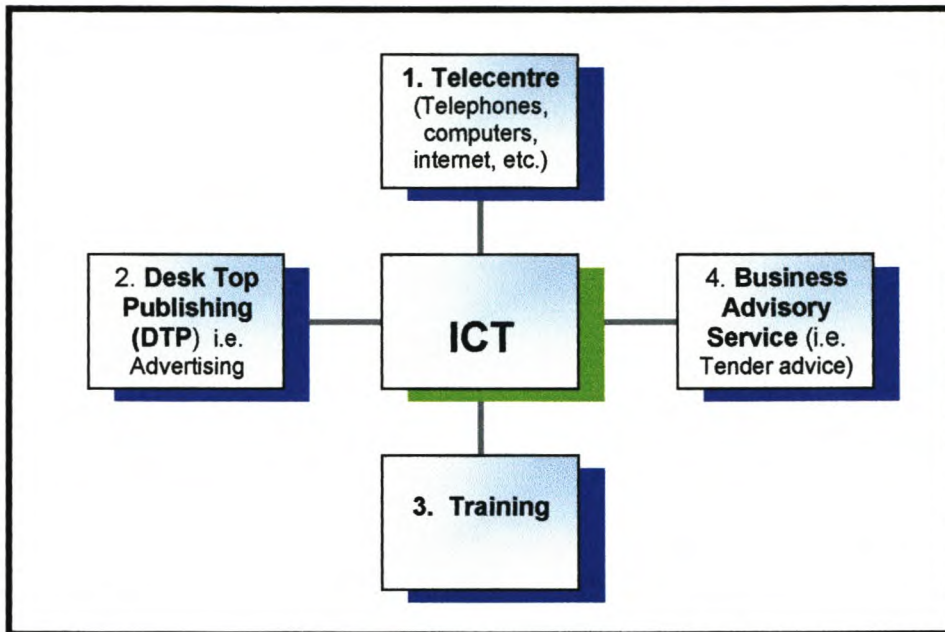
Security Policy (securing financial data); a Password Security policy (for internal use by staff members); and an Internet policy. Stellenbosch is connected to the internet via a permanent leased-line connection. This connection is obtained from an Internet

Service Provider (ISP) and is paid for on a monthly basis. According to Mr. R. Muller the Stellenbosch municipality's internet site provides the following services:

- External and internal business communication
- Enhancing the efficiency of corporate logistics through remote support, remote collaboration and virtual work groups
- Cost containment by reducing faxes and phone calls
- Marketing of Stellenbosch in the global arena (includes tourism)
- Information retrieval for the purpose of research (for example the Stellenbosch Municipalities IDP is available on their web site)

The Stellenbosch IDP (2002/ 2003) does not stipulate how ICT will be integrated in development objectives of the region. Due to a lack of ICT policies addressing community based technology strategies, Mr. du Buisson (Project Manager) introduced an ICT model (Figure 6), illustrating the four components which will contribute to the success of the Dwars River Valley MPCC:

Figure 6: ITC model of the Dwars River Valley MPCC



(Source: Du Buisson, 2002: 4)

In addition, these services (provided by the MPCC) did not only include the training of the community in computer literacy but also entailed skills development. Training of a construction team started on the 23 April and ended on the 5th of May 2003 with a budget of R16 000. The idea was to train people so that they can participate in the following projects:

- The upgrading of historical buildings
- Development of the Church routes
- Building of the mountain huts, 'braai' spots, a hut on the dam site, retail complex and MPCC structure.

Volunteers were trained in brick laying, carpentry, painting and decorating. The training instructor was English speaking and did not understand any Afrikaans, while all the trainees were Afrikaans speaking. Only 7 of the original 12 trainees

attended the class. Even these remaining 7 trainees received one-off jobs. It is thus largely debatable whether sustainable job opportunities were provided and if the training funds (R16 000) were effectively/ optimally utilised.

In the business plan of the MPCC, a retail complex is being planned. This retail complex will be situated near the MPCC but the definite location is not final. This retail complex will create 240 to 300 permanent jobs when successfully implemented (also see Appendix 8 for newspaper article). This concept was set aside because of a lack of funding. Therefore other alternatives had to be explored. The "VCSV" (Verenigde Christen Studente Vereniging) owns a portion of land in the DRV vicinity. The Chairman of this association, Mr. David Neft, is willing to sell the portion of land; or develop it as a Youth Centre. Therefore, a possible consortium can be established between MPCC and the VCSV. The proposed complex will house a variety of functions available to the community including a safe house; HIV Help centre; Tourism satellite; conference hall; etc.

- **Location and Linkages**

Mr. A. Cysters recognised that the location of the MPCC is not entirely favourable. Even if the retail complex is successfully constructed, the location of the MPCC still remains a problem. It is far from the other regions in the DRV and Pniel community is not in need of such a MPCC. The reason it is located in Pniel is because the old municipal building is located there with an already established

infrastructure. Construction that will take place is only to upgrade the existing buildings. A new building will require about R2 million for construction if situated in another region. The majority of the land is owned by Anglo American, which makes it impossible to buy the land or acquire land from Anglo America because the corporation always sells it to the highest bidder (Interview, 2003).

Many argue that the location of the MPCC is favourable, but those living far from the MPCC and these functions, did not find its location favourable. The majority of the residents in the DRV (excluding Pniel) asked the question: '...then why don't they establish satellite MPCCs in our region, so we can also be part of the development?' Community members stated that smaller (satellite) MPCCs, located in Groot Drakenstein and Lanquedoc will be appropriate. Mr du Buisson recognised these statements and addressed them in the MPCC committee meetings, but no resolution was reached. Many of these management decisions are taken by the Trust.

- **Management (e.g. Trust)**

A working group comprising representatives of the MPCC, Tourism and IDP Committees and Stellenbosch Municipality has been formed to decide on the election of trustees for the Dwars River Valley Community Development Trust. The group is chaired by Nicky Ceasar of the Stellenbosch Municipality (Pniel Administration). Various meetings were held, but the mechanism for nomination of trustees has not been finalised.

Mr. P. de Jager felt that when the Trust was established and the location of the MPCC determined, there was not enough participation or information provided. Even the library situated next to the MPCC offices has no information about the initiative for the communities to view. From Table 1 it is clear that the community is not satisfied with current participation strategies being utilised.

At the commencement of the MPCC development a Section 21 company was considered. The committee did further research and decided on a Trust. According to Mr. Cysters, the possible benefits of a Trust include:

- It is more viable in the long term
- Provides greater transparency and accountability with respect to the management of the MPCC
- It is a non-profit option
- People working for the Trust are volunteers (Interview, 2003)

According to Nicky Ceaser, if the MPCC is not managed correctly or sustainably, it risks becoming a 'white elephant'.

- **Community participation and empowerment**

The community heard about the MPCC via community meetings as well as pamphlets that were distributed. Table 1 indicated that about 70% of the community members that were interviewed knew about the MPCC. Mr. Bryan

Smith, resident of Pniel and Chairman of the MPCC committee, stated: 'I was disappointed that the information mostly reached Pniel residents and excluded the rest of the DRV'. He also added that the MPCC is a good move in the right direction, but without participation it will not be successful (Interview, 2003).

Charlene Jacobs is a resident from Kylemore. She visited the MPCC and obtained qualifications as a Business Adviser. According to her, there was poor and ineffective participation during the development of the MPCC. She stated: 'This can be explained due to a lack of interest and motivation from the community and a lack of information from the local government'. When asked if the community supported this MPCC, she answered '...only certain parties and groups' (Interview, 2003). On one occasion, when visiting the MPCC, only Mr. B. Smith came to work. When asked where the other 10 members were, he stated: '...they only come in when there is something to do or when there is money available for a project'. He added that this 'will not be soon' (Interview, 2003). The MPCC members are volunteers and are remunerated when a project is underway. Currently they are not motivated and are seeking other work opportunities. Even Mr Cysters stated that it is hard to keep people motivated, seeing that they have lives of their own, and sitting around unproductively will not enhance their opportunities.

On the economic empowerment front, documents compiled by Mr. du Buisson (Project Manager), indicated that approximately 140 temporary jobs will be

created; i.e. 80 people in the cleaning up of the Dwars River and 60 people in creating mountain walks. This initiative is aimed at addressing poverty alleviation and economic development in the Dwars River Valley. Unfortunately, these jobs are unsustainable 'once-off' piecemeal contractual agreements (Interview, 2003).

3.6.2. Dwars River Valley Tourism Strategy (Major Findings)

Tourism is a major growth industry in South Africa. It is also true that tourism development tends to be capital intensive (DRV Tourism Plan, 2001:3). The lack of capital acts as a barrier to entry for most community members and prevents them from contributing to tourism initiatives in their own communities. The Tourism Plan explores the economic and community development potential of the Dwars River Valley, with a specific emphasis on the role that developmental tourism can play. The plan focuses on the empowerment of Dwars River Valley community members, through capacity building, creation of new businesses, job creation and ownership. Advertising the community is an important strategy so as to make the residents more aware of the potential around them. The DRV Tourism Committee took this as the point of departure and worked with local government and the community to establish a Tourism Bureau (Photo 7).



Photo 7: Linda Nichols at the Tourism Bureau, also situated at the MPCC offices.

Linda Nichols (Tourism Officer) stated that the tourism development received R60 000 from the provincial Minister Joyce Witbooi. The official opening (see Appendix 9) of the Tourism Bureau was on the 28 October 2003 when the cheque was handed over. In support of this funding, the Stellenbosch Municipality awarded the Tourism Bureau a further R24 500. To date, R16 000 of this money has been spent on the activities of the organisation. The municipality realised that the DRV has the potential to grow and two major growth points in tourism were identified (see Appendix 10 for a pamphlet that details Dwars River Valley's Tourism opportunities)

- Heritage and cultural tourism
- Adventure, sports and eco-tourism

These themes have been developed in the Plan, leading to specific tourism products that are likely to be unique to the DRV. The Plan outlines some of the projects the Bureau has been debating. There is a funding request for about R13m to enable completion of the planned tourism development activities. The main focus of the plan is to:

- Create the management framework
- Develop the capacity of the Dwars River Valley community
- Create the physical infrastructure needed
- Develop the mountain and river areas
- Explore the potential of the heritage and history of the valley
- Brand the valley as a unique tourist destination
- Introduce formal links with other tourism attractions in the region

The funding is intended to be used to establish businesses and create more than 300 new jobs. These jobs will be combined with commitment, participation and hard work, all of these leading to eventual ownership.

The Committee also looked at the sustainability of the project, through income generation and to infrastructure maintenance. The broad Business Plan shows that the project is viable, because it can generate enough income, meet expenditure and create a surplus for growth and expansion.

On 6 December 2002, Channele Marais of Winelands Tourism, delivered a presentation on the overall tourism strategy for the region thus enabling

stakeholders in the Dwars River Valley to assess how their vision for their valley coincides with the broader tourism picture. At this presentation, the group decided that the activities under the tourism theme had links to three existing Committees; i.e. Tourism, MPCC and IDP. As all three Committees were represented at the meeting, the delegates decided that the three Committees would work together to flesh out the details, where tourism is regarded as the anchor theme to be linked to other relevant themes in a community-driven IDP for the Dwars River Valley.

According to Mr. du Buisson (Interview, 2003), the MPCC committee proposed tourism activities to enhance the development potential of Dwars River Valley. The proposed activities concentrate on developing the tourism potential of the Dwars River Valley and consist of a number of categories of development. The categories include a new road; a retail complex; recreation; the upgrading of rivers, mountains and dams; sports tourism; and, uplifting the heritage and history of the community.

A survey was conducted in 1997 to look at the upgrading of the road through the Valley. Representations and applications were made to the Minister of the Executive Council (MEC) for Transport (Western Cape) to upgrade the road. Negotiations took place between the Pniel Transitional Council and the MEC in 1999. In 2000, WKE Consulting Engineers were appointed to do a final assessment. Negotiations were held with Anglo American farms about the

redirection of the road behind the Logie Hall and through the existing Anglo American Farms property. A presentation was made to motivate the placement of a traffic circle in this area. Final representations have been made to the Minister about the budget for the upgrading and additions to the road. The budget has been approved and construction can start as soon as the funding has been released.

A further activity proposed was the retail complex. There is no central retail complex in the Dwars River Valley. As part of the overall development, a new complex is proposed. The traffic circle on the proposed new section of the road is the ideal location for a retail complex and business hive. It will also act as the business centre in the valley. The old section of the road can be transformed into a walkway and scenic route for visitors.

Another activity being explored is the recreation theme. The MPCC committee, together with the community, listed the potential developments around the Dwars River, the mountain and the dams in the valley, coupled with the potential for sport and adventure tourism. There are a number of dams in the area. These are to be developed for fishing of various kinds, including indigenous fish, trout, bass and carp.

The Dwars River Valley has a long tradition of excellence in the sporting arena. The Pniel Villagers Rugby club has existed for 100 years and plays in the top

league in the Western Cape. The Pniel Coronation Cricket Club has produced national and international cricket players, and currently has 5 members in the Boland team. Other sports are also practiced at a competitive level, including tennis, netball, karate, athletics, marathon running, cycling and ballroom dancing. The competence of the community in sport will be developed under the tourist theme to offer adventure tourism products.

3.7. Conclusion

A lack of finances can have a negative impact on any development. It prevents plans from being implemented. Sceptics argue that because tourism is often driven by foreign (private sector) interests, it has limited potential to contribute much to poverty elimination in developing countries. It is noted for high levels of revenue 'leakage', and of the revenue that is retained, much is captured by rich or middle-income groups - not the poor. Tourism is also a volatile industry, being extremely susceptible to events which are difficult to control i.e. political unrest, exchange rate fluctuations, natural disasters (WSSD, 2001: 2). MPCCs across South Africa have noted failure in one or the other aspect of the implementation. Even when money is available, the community should play a crucial role, or it will be a lost cause. Community participation and community empowerment are important for the alleviation of poverty. ICT should be utilised according to the needs of the community. This implementation should be based on comprehensive research. All spheres of government should understand the dynamics of a community and apply recommendations accordingly, based on the uniqueness of each community.

Chapter 4

Conclusions and Recommendations

Multi Purpose Community Centres (MPCCs)

4.1. Introduction

MPCCs can through relationships with non governmental organisations (NGOs), libraries, schools, and other stakeholders play a crucial role in breaking through the barriers of disempowerment. Even though all MPCCs have common problems or good practices, it is important to recognise that each and every centre is unique with its own problems and good practices (Patel, 1998: 9).

4.2. Aims and objectives of this chapter

The aims of this chapter are to formulate conclusions based on the findings in Chapter 3, supported by the theory in Chapter 2 (see Figure 7 for summary of major findings); and, secondly, to provide some recommendations to the problems which were identified from the case study.

4.3. Concluding remarks

The nature and locations of the MPCCs in South Africa renders financial sustainability difficult because the majority of them largely serve historically disadvantaged communities with limited financial resources to pay for services. It is for this reason that almost all MPCCs are externally funded in one way or

another by donations/grants. For MPCCs to be sustainable, we need to look at sustainable ways of generating additional income.

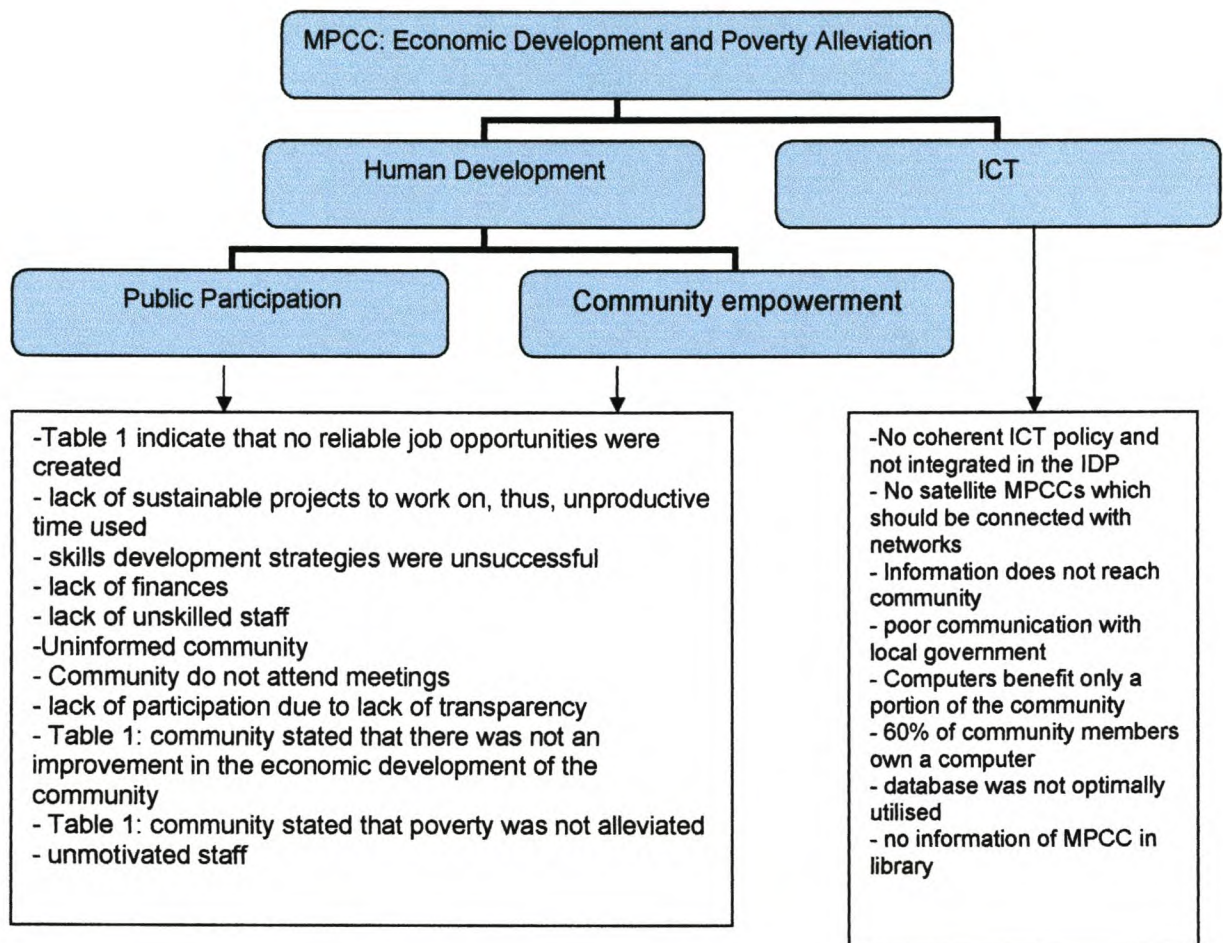
MPCCs should be rooted in the community because their sustainability depends largely on the perceptions of the community that they serve and the sense of ownership cultivated. The service mix provided at the MPCC should be guided by the needs of the community served. When participation is effectively utilised, the community hopefully become more involved. From the case study, Mr. de Jager stated that a HIV facility would have been more appropriate. In many instances, the capacity exists for the community to participate, but they choose not to get involved. Therefore, the perception of the community also needs to change.

The key distinctive feature of pro-poor tourism is that it puts poor people and poverty at the centre. Starting from there, it views tourism as one component of the household, local and national economies and environment that affects them. The current approach to 'sustainable tourism' fails to take into account the links between poverty, environment and development. In a world of growing inequality, there can be no doubt that attacking poverty is a critical component of sustainable development. Global stability depends upon this recognition (WSSD, 2001: 5).

ICT can potentially lead to poverty alleviation if correctly implemented. In the Dwars River, this opportunity was not fully utilised and work created from these

were unsustainable. Empowerment was also directed to a selected few and the most vulnerable groups in the community are still left in the poverty trap. The Dwars Valley community consists of very poor and very rich people. It is often these vulnerable groups that stay poor (as Benjamin, 1997 also emphasised). The community felt that empowerment did not take place. The majority of the community feels that the MPCC will not be successful.

Therefore in conclusion, the view of the community was that MPCCs will not contribute to poverty alleviation and improved economic development in the Dwars River Valley. This outcome depended on successful community empowerment, community participation and an appropriate Information Communication Technology (ICT) policy. These components were not fully utilised and optimally applied in the community. The officials involved need to reconsider their strategies. The recommendations, which follow, can serve as a guideline, to assist in the road ahead. In conclusion, each community has a unique set of opportunities and problems, and must develop a strategy (or combinations of strategies) that is specific to the area. Figure 7 below serves as a summary of the most important findings.

Figure 7: Summary of Major findings

4.4. Recommendations

1. Financial Sustainability

- The need for financial sustainability in the centres investigated meant reducing the operational costs by locating them within existing structures to reduce building and maintenance costs. The DRV MPCC is located in the existing municipal buildings. The only concern should be that community participation prevails during the projects decision-making process
- Centres can raise funds internally by selling other services like photocopying, printing, typing, public phones, community directory etc. Mr. Bryan Smith (Chairman of the MPCC Committee) said that about 60 percent of Pniel's residents own computers. Sufficient advertising of these services is necessary and more internet services should be available to the community.
- Linking-up with bigger structures or organisations that have better resources; i.e. with the "VCSV"
- It was noticeable that the DRV MPCC was not generating sufficient funds themselves, and was reliant on external donors. The MPCC has to find a way of improving and guaranteeing their financial sustainability through revenue generation. For example, members, who obtained computer skills can educate the community by providing computer classes at the school for a negotiable fee, which can be ploughed back into the MPCC

2. Services

- Operational costs need to be kept as low as possible through, for example, recruiting more regular volunteers and a full time centre co-ordinator. This will require more motivation of the volunteers as well as more sustainable projects
- To promote community activities, organise joint ventures with other organisations and sponsors
- The municipality should formulate an ICT policy based on the role information technology should play in the lives of the community. This policy should then form part of the municipality's IDP
- Depending on the income level of the community, service charges should be kept low, assuming that lower service charges will result in more frequent use
- The library also situated at the same building does not even have any information about the MPCC for the community to view. This needs to be addressed because the more information is made available to the community; there is greater likelihood of more community participation in civic affairs. The library should keep archives on the proceedings of the MPCC so the community can view them freely. This potentially resolves issues of transparency

- It is useful to have a directory of community organisations and activities that are available to render services to the community at large. This attracts more residents to the centres and could be sold to organisations, businesses and other key people in the community. Presently, the MPCC has a database with all the names of the unemployed in the DRV. When work is available, the MPCC contacts them, but this is only once off and is not sustainable. This occurs due to a lack of finance

3. Location

- The location of the centre is also very important. Locating the centre next to other community centres or areas frequented by the community is an advantage because busy centres are those that are located in or next to libraries, near public phones, in church buildings. The MPCC in Pniel has enough infrastructure to attract the community. The problem is that those who need these services are vastly dispersed

4. Management

- Management of the centre should be the responsibility of the centre co-ordinator, not the board of directors or trustees as this delays decision-making (Carstens, 2003)
- For any centre to be successful it has to secure community support at multiple levels (neighbourhood and settlement scales), and in numerous

spheres (political, religious, social, etc.). According to Lanquedoc resident, Mr. Pieterse (Interview, 2003): 'Without community support, it would be like fighting a battle without weapons, not even knowing where the battle is'

5. Linkages

- The community should have a sense of ownership of the resources of the DRV. These centres are seldom the targets of criminals if the community takes pride in them
- A relationship with other MPCCs is also very important and can help centres with similar interests to share resources and information and learn from one another's successes and failures
- MPCC satellite offices need to be located in the smaller regions outside Pniel to improve communication in the Dwars River. These satellites should then be linked via ICT

6. Operational Aspects

- Centres should at least have one very skilled person with a University degree/diploma in a related field, and assistants who have experience in community work. This is very helpful because while some view a MPCC

as a government initiative, it should be based on local ownership. On-going training is also vital for staff

- Having a professional fund-raiser is also very important so that the co-ordinators can focus on their day to day work instead of worrying whether they will have resources for their projects
- A business plan is also important for distribution to visitors, and to identify and highlight community needs so that people visiting the centre and those interested in helping are able to choose an area that they can assist in

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Appendix 1

Attacking poverty with information

Virtual Souk expands market access for artisans in the Middle East and North Africa

Farima Aoubaida, a Moroccan weaver from Tafouine and a mother of seven—with the money she earned from selling her products on the Virtual Souk—repaired her roof and started building an indoor latrine, one of the few in her village. Ijia Attalbihsen, another woman artisan in Morocco, spent her profits to buy cement and windows for her house. With future profits, she wants to buy a truck to transport rugs from her village to the market or buy bicycles that women can ride.

—BBC Online News, 14 October 1999

Artisans in the Middle East and North Africa have always crafted high-quality products using traditional techniques and ancestral know-how. But shrinking local markets and difficulties in gaining access to more lucrative national and international markets are leading to a gradual disappearance of culturally rich crafts—and with them an important source of income for poor people.

The Virtual Souk is bucking this trend. Since 1997 this Internet-based marketplace has been providing direct access to international markets for several hundred artisans from Egypt, Lebanon, Morocco, and Tunisia, many of them women. The network is expanding to other countries in the region, and there is demand to adapt the concept to East Asia and Latin America.

Online sales soared tenfold between the first and last quarters of 1999, reaching markets around the world, including countries in Europe and North America and as far as Australia, Japan, and South Africa. Participating artisans receive 65–80 percent of the proceeds, a much larger margin than through traditional channels. And the gains are more than simply financial. Through the Virtual Souk, artisans

gain access to opportunities for empowerment, capacity building, income generation—and for the use of their skills with dignity.

Cellular phone technology gives bargaining power to women in Bangladesh

I always sell eggs to middlemen. In the past, whatever prices they offered, I accepted because I had no idea about the going prices of eggs. . . . Last week, the middleman came . . . and desired to pay me 12 taka per hali [four units]. . . . Keeping him waiting, I rushed to check the prices through the Village Phone. The price was 14 taka per hali of eggs in nearby markets. I came back and refused to sell to him at the lower prices. . . . After a brief haggling, we agreed to buy and sell at 13 taka per hali.

—Halima Khatun, a poor, illiterate woman who sells eggs, Bangladesh

A subsidiary of Grameen Bank, Grameen Telecom operates a village pay phone program that leases cellular telephones to selected bank members, mostly women in rural areas, who use the telephone to provide services and earn money. Today around 2,000 village pay phones are in place. The target is to install 40,000 telephones by 2002, introducing telefax and email services as well.

These phones have helped lower the cost of information gathering. This can be seen in lower prices for poultry feed, more stable diesel prices, and less spoilage of perishable goods due to more precise shipment dates. Women providing the phone services have gained confidence and new status as “phone ladies.” Telephone users include both rich and poor, but poor people make more calls for economic reasons.

Source: For the Virtual Souk, see www.peoplink/vsouk/; for the Grameen Telecom cellular phone program, see Burr (2000).

(Source: World Development Report, 2000: 73)

Appendix 2

Interview questions: for Project managers and Stakeholders

1. What according to you are the strong and weak points of the DRV?
 2. How do you define community participation and empowerment?
 3. Was there participation in the construction and location of the MPCC?
 4. Do you think sustainable work opportunities were created?
 5. What is your current financial situation after the HRSP withdrew their funds?
 6. What is the current state of mind of the committee members given that they presently have no projects to work and the fact that they are volunteers?
 7. What did you decide on – Section 21 or Trust? And why?
 8. How are the daily operational costs of the MPCC covered?
 9. Do you think the ward elections will bring changes to the current situation?
 10. What is your opinion of satellite MPCCs in the different regions of DRV?
 11. Do you think the MPCC will be successful?
-

Appendix 3

Vraelys/Questionnaire: Multi-Purpose Community Centre

Name/ Naam :

Phone number/Telefoonnommer :

1. Mag ek u by die bogenoemde nommer skakel indien verdere inligting benodig word? */Can I contact you at the above stated number if I require further information?* Maak 'n kruisie. */Make a cross (6).*

Ja /Yes	
Nee /No	

2. Hoe het u die eerste keer te hore gekom van die MPCC en wat was u reaksie daarop? */How did you first come to hear of the MPCC and what was your reaction?*

3. Volgens u, was daar voldoende publieke deelname in die besluitnemingsproses om die MPCC op te rig? */According to you, was there efficient and effective public participation in the decision-making process in developing the MPCC?*

4. Het die gemeenskap hierdie strategie ondersteun? /*Did the community support this strategy?*

5. Wat beskou u as Dwarsrivier Vallei se swak - en sterk punte? /*What according to you, are the weaknesses and strengths of the Dwars River Valley?*

Sterkpunte/*Strenghts*: _____

Swakpunte/*Weaknesses*: _____

6. Volgens u, kan die MPCC 'n bydrae lewer om hierdie swakpunte te verbeter?
/Will the MPCC, according to you, eradicate these weaknesses?

7. Weet u van enige persone wat bemagtig was deur hierdie projek en hoe het dit hulle lewe verander? */Do you know of any community members that were empowered by this project and how did this change their lives?*

8. Enige verdere kommentaar. */Any other comments.*

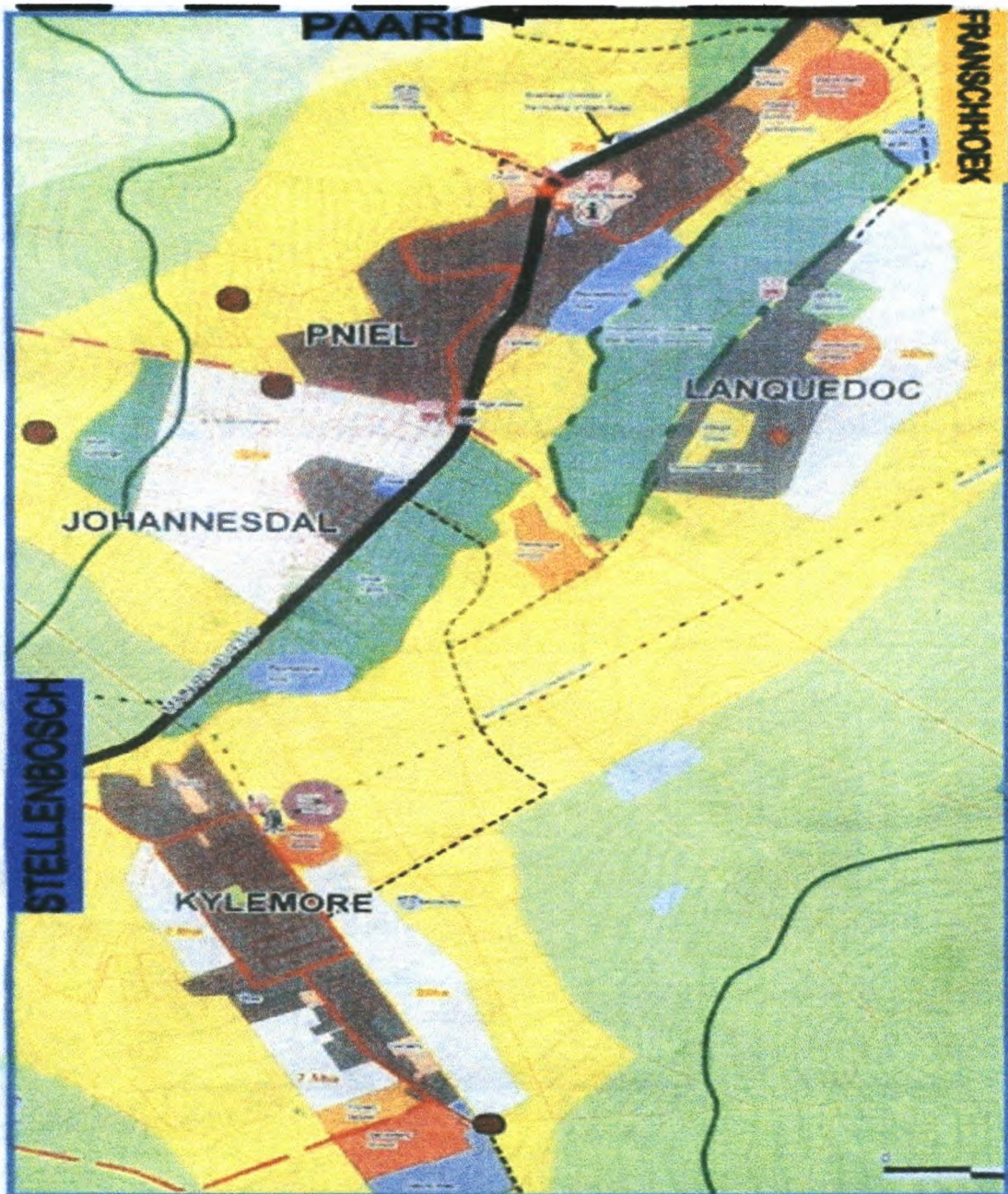
Appendix 4

Unstructured Questions

The questions require a 'Yes', 'No', or 'Uncertain' answer.

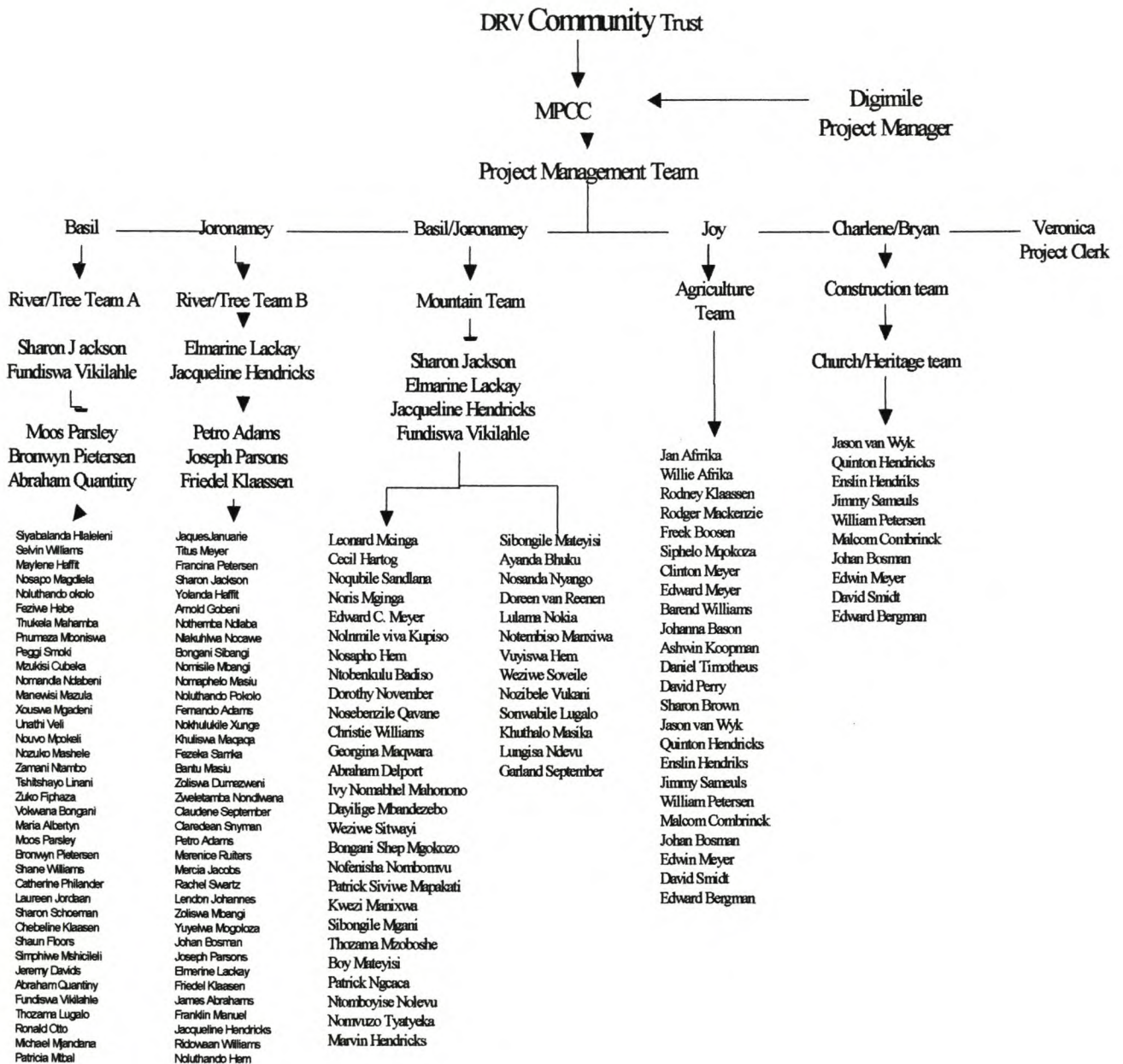
1. Are you familiar with the MPCC at this building?
2. Do you think an MPCC is necessary?
3. Would you take part in projects of the MPCC?
4. Have you ever made use of the services provided by the MPCC (for example computers, fax, internet, etc.)?
5. Will ICT improve your life and the life of the community?
6. Do you have other access to technology?
7. Do you think the MPCC is effectively located?
8. Do you attend community meetings?
9. Do you feel there are enough opportunities created for participation by the MPCC and municipality?
10. Have there been any improvements in the region since the MPCCs location?
11. Do you think the MPCC will be successful?
12. Have there been any significant economic changes in the region since the establishment of the MPCC?
13. Do you think the MPCC will contribute to poverty alleviation?

Appendix 5



(Source: DRV Tourism Bureau, 2003)

Appendix 6



(Source: MPCC Business Plan, 2001)

Appendix 7



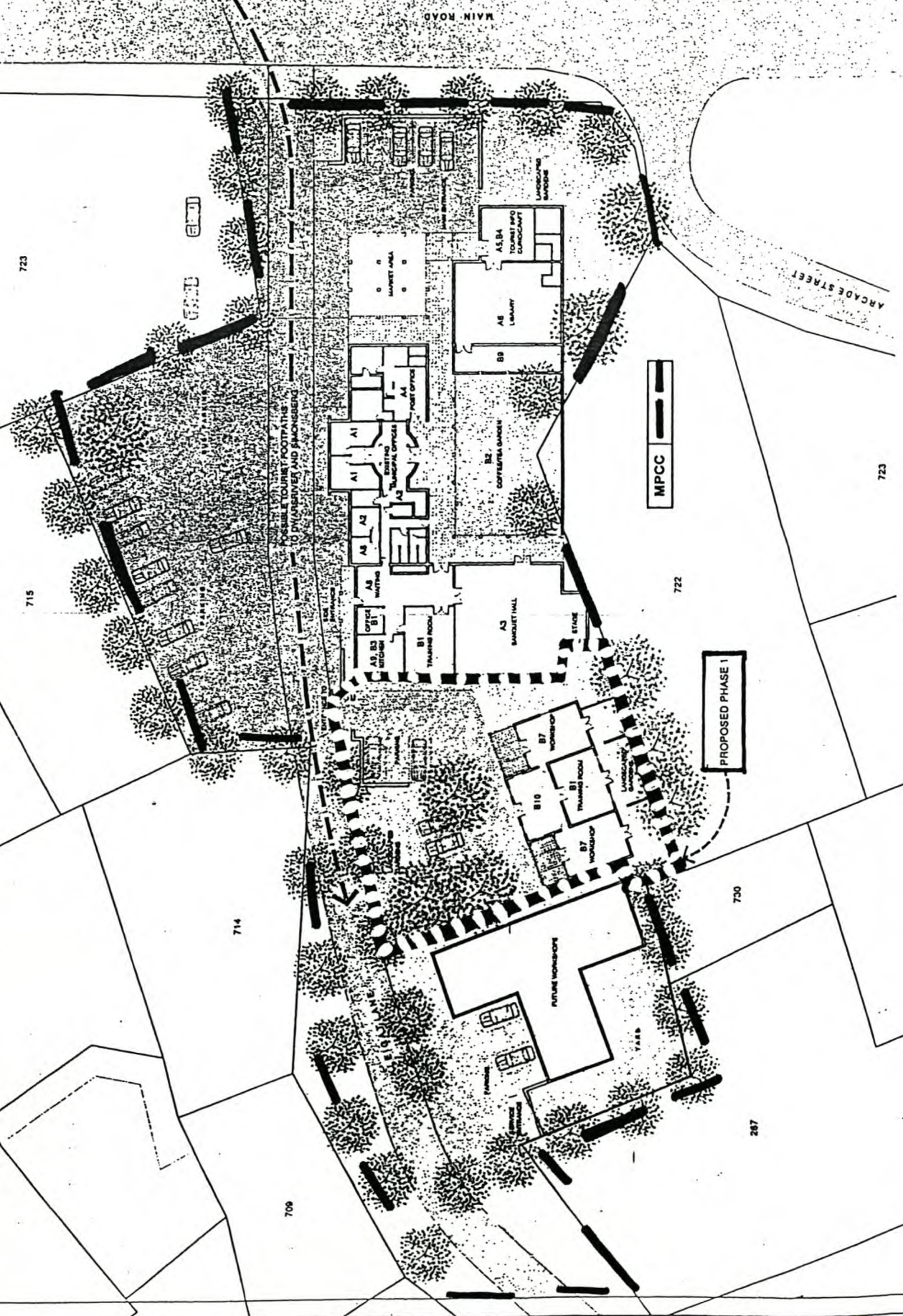
FOR DISCUSSION ONLY

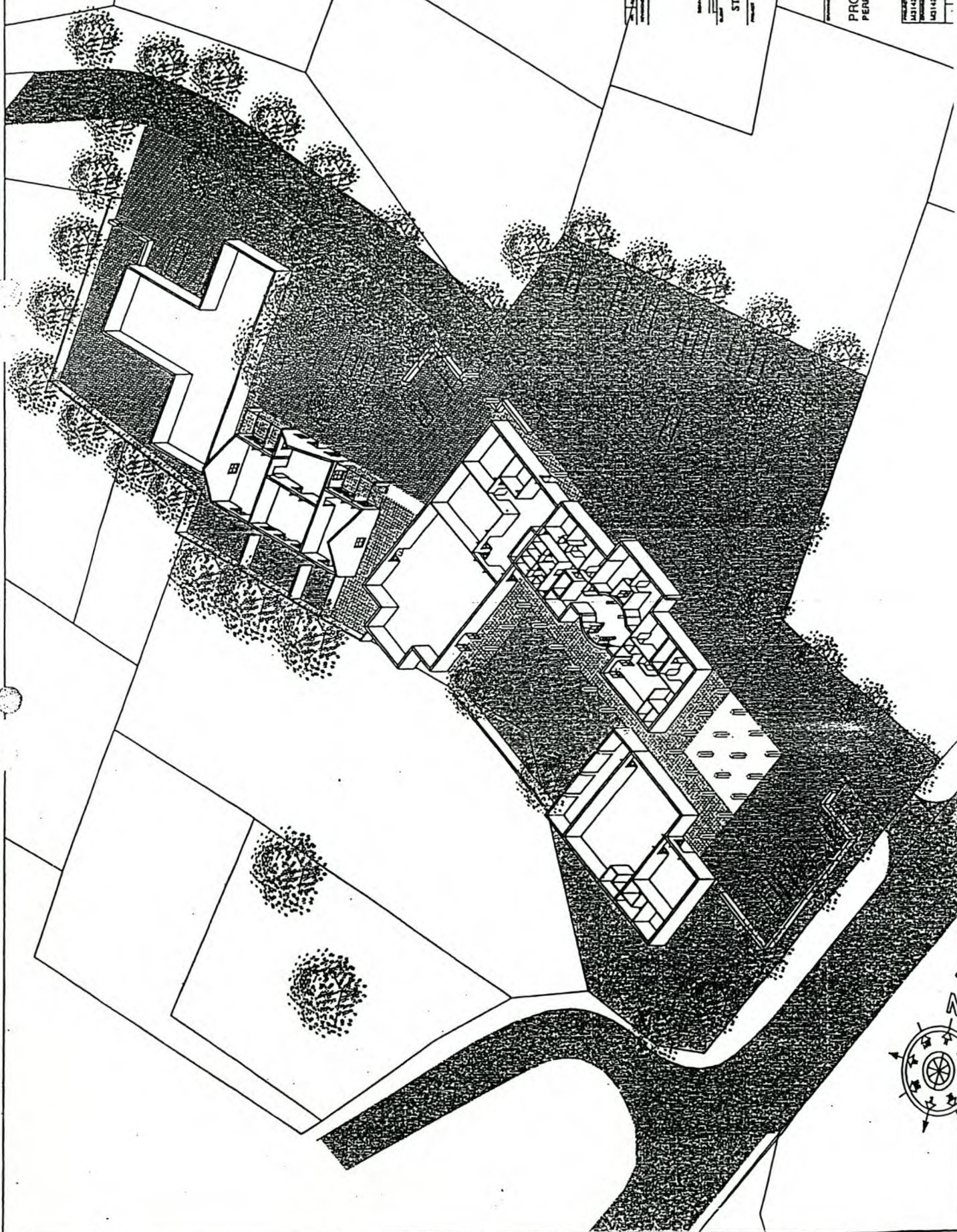
STELLENBOSCH MUNICIPALITY

P-N-I-E-L
LED PROJECT

DEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL
PHASE 1
ERF. 720 - MUNICIPAL PROPERTY
(EXISTING MUNICIPAL COMPLEX)

PROJECT NO.	11143
DATE	14 NOV 2021
DESIGNED BY	11143 AD01
SCALE	1:200
DATE	JAN 21





Appendix 8

Business

NEXUS FINANCIAL SOLUTIONS

For people who own their own business.

Danie Wiese
(021) 809-5407



Dwars River development gets R1,5 million boost

A multi-purpose community centre being developed in Pniel, received a very welcome financial boost this week.

This local initiative involves identifying ideas and skills to stimulate economic growth and development. Because of the success achieved thus far, the MEC for Housing, through the Human Settlement Redevelopment Programme, donated a further amount of R1 479 million to the centre on Wednesday.

"This initiative should serve as another example of how the local authority and the community can work together for a better life for all," Alderman Willie Ortell, Mayor of the Greater Stellenbosch, said.

"It involves identifying ideas and skills to stimulate economic growth and development. Today we not only receive money, but we open a new chapter in the history of Dwars River.

"This part of the Western Cape has been the central point for cultural development and has produced many South African leaders over the years. We have a rich diversity of people who all contribute to the character of this area. It is also one of the most beautiful areas in the

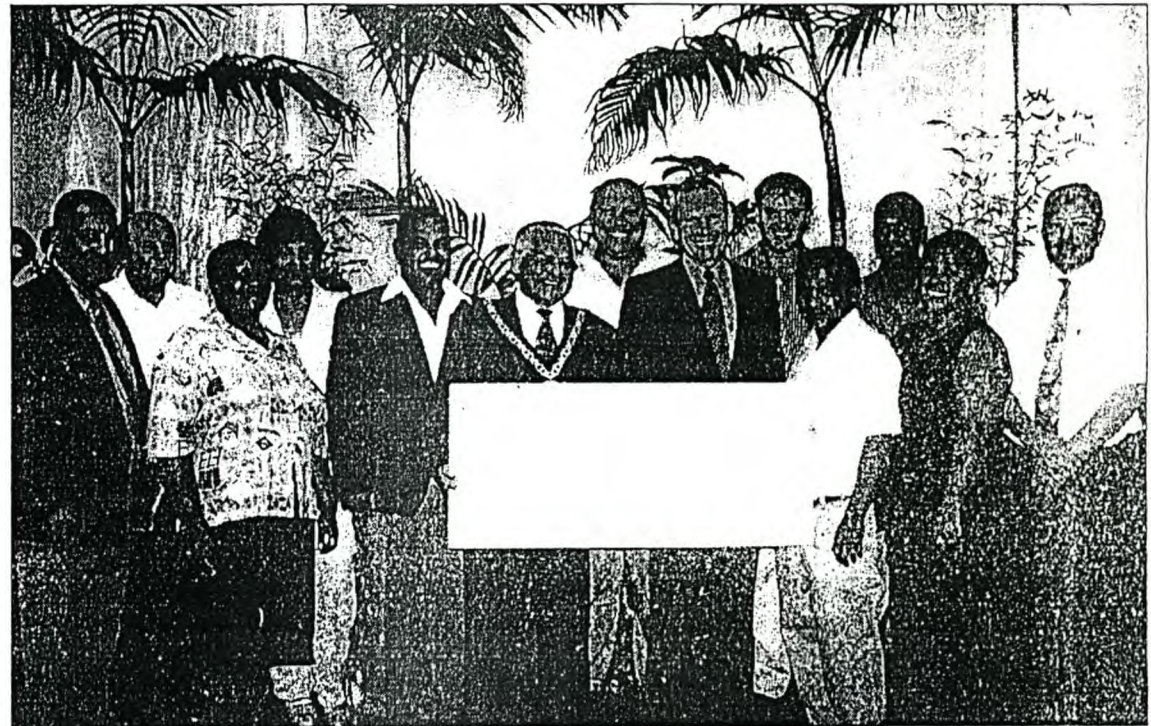
country. We can use the privileges to our advantage to meet the challenges of the future; we have already started," Alderman Ortell said.

The money will be used to create about forty small business opportunities and three hundred new jobs in this small community. Training has already been given in fields such as project management, creating business plans as well as technical training to assist with the installation of hardware and software. Training will in future be given in fields ranging from typing to financial management and business support will be available to those participating in the programme.

The process was initiated by the previous Pniel Transitional Council and is now supported by the Stellenbosch Municipality. It will be managed by a representative committee.

The multi-purpose community centre is an example of certain initiatives that have been implemented in the Stellenbosch municipal area.

Another is the unique agreement to settle land claims in the Franschoek area where housing has been coupled with pay-outs and business opportunities.



A cheque of R1,5m donated by the Department of Housing for a multi-purpose hall for the Dwars River community, was enough to get the smiles going. At the same occasion, Mayor of Stellenbosch, Alderman Willie Ortell, also donated an amount of R900 out of his own pocket for this cause. Receiving the cheque from Colin Pritchard (PAWK, sixth from the right), is Alderman Willie Ortell (to his left). The others (from left) are: Winston Meyer, Uys de Buisson, Councillor Agnes Tshitshiba, Fiona van Graan, Brian Smith, Alroy Cyster, Emile van der Merwe, Kallie Pietersen, Joramey Maseko, Councillor Sandra Jooste and Niel Lyners.

Pic: Lionel Cloete

Paarl Post

Thursday 13 March 2003

Pniel gets R1,5m boost

[[Top](#)]

A MULTI-PURPOSE Community Centre is to be developed in Pniel with provincial funding of R1,5 milion.

This local initiative involves identifying ideas and skills to stimulate economic growth and development.

Because of the success reach so far the MEC for housing, through the "Human Settlement Re-Development Programme", handed over a further amount of R1,479 million yesterday.

"This initiative should serve as another example of how the local authority and the community can work together for a better life for all", said Alderman Willie Ortell, Mayor of the Greater Stellenbosch.

The money would be used to create about forty small-business opportunities and three hundred new jobs in this small community.

Training has already been given in fields like project management, creating business plans as well as technical training to be able to assist with the installation of hardware and software.

Training will in future be give in fields ranging from typing to financial management and business support will be available to those that form part of the programme. The process was initiated by the previous Pniel Transitional Council and is now supported by the Stellenbosch Municipality. It will be managed by a representative committee.

Appendix 9

Vrydag, 31 Oktober 2003

EIENDOMME / PROPERTIES

Eikestadnuus Bladsy 33

Tourism Day in Dwars River Valley

ON 28 October the Western Cape Minister of Tourism and Gambling, Mrs Joyce Witbooi, attended a Tourism Day in the Dwars River Valley. It was organised as a Dwars River Valley Tourism Initiative.

According to the chairperson of Dwars River Valley Tourism, Mrs Linda Nicholls, it was an important step in the development of tourism activities within the local communities.

Activities kicked off at Le Pommier Conference Centre where the Regional District Mayor, Mr Clarence Johnson, made a presentation and the Kylemore school choir performed. Afterwards guests were transported by omnibus and bus to the Tourism Bureau in Pniel, where a ribbon cutting ceremony was held with Stellenbosch Mayor, Mr Willie Ortell. The Pniel school choir performed at this occasion.

Later on Ms Nicholls lead a guided tour of the Village Walk, whereafter Minister Leon Klate spoke on the history of the Pniel

Congregational Church at the church itself. Guests were then able to tour the church grounds and monuments as well as enjoy exhibitions by crafters.

The event was concluded at the Pniel picnic site with an address by Minister Witbooi. She expressed her desire for people to see how tourism development works in practice and said the Dwars River Valley was an excellent example of a small tourism route in the Boland region, at present developing its inherent tourism potential to attract visitors. It boasts homestays with stunning mountain views, hiking trails and historic monuments. The development of the Dwars River Escape Route was another tourist attraction discussed.

The Tourism Day followed a meeting attended by 150 tourism enthusiasts at the Pniel Banqueting Hall in August. A forum was established to ensure a stake in the tourism industry. The goal is to unlock the wealth and add value to tourism products by inhabitants of the Dwars River Valley in general.



Alderman Willie Ortell and Minister Joyce Witbooi at the ribbon cutting ceremony.

Pic: Daan Williams

Appendix 10

The Dwars River Valley

The Dwars River Valley Tourism is a project of all the Dwars River communities like Banghoek, Kylemore, Pniel, Lanquedoc and Groot Drakenstein.

All these communities are linked to each other by the Dwars River and Simonsberg.

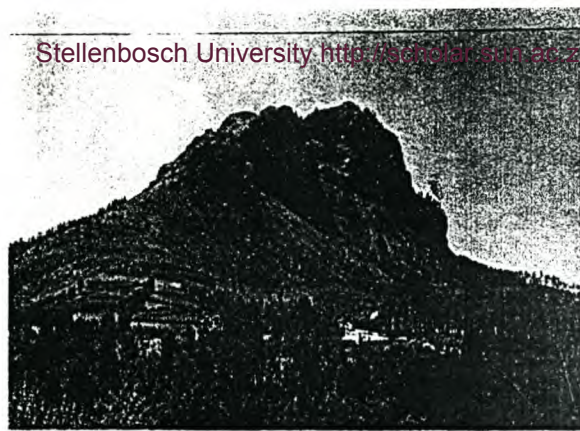


The Dwars River .

This river starts in the Drakenstein mountain and flows through the valley into the Berg river .

This river has a multi purpose to these communities. The farmers use the water for irrigation. We have swimming places like waterways and Pniel's day camping where the community can enjoy the fresh water on a hot summers day.

Stellenbosch University <http://matlabar.sun.ac.za>



The Simonsberg

This mountain is like a watchdog over this small community in Kylemore. We also have a hiking route on this mountain where we have our different plant species, the "silwermyn gat" and the "seven rooms."



Pniel Congregational Church

The Congregational church was established and built in 1834. The first Missionary Superintendent in this community was Rev. Johannes Frederick Stegmann (1843 to 1910) This church is one of this valley's oldest historical buildings.



Freedom Monument

Erected in 1992 this monument is a symbol to commemorate the freed slaves who were the first settlers of the mission station in 1843.

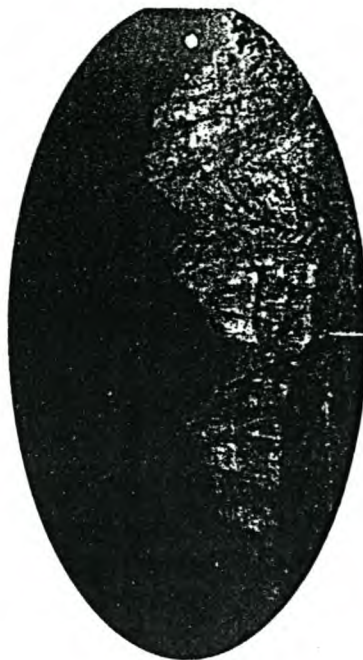


St Giles church , Lanquedoc



Old Apostolic Church , Kylemore

Dwars River Valley Tourism Bureau



Tourism bureau

Main Road Pniel

Tel: 8852661

Fax: 8858662

P.O. Box 178

Pniel

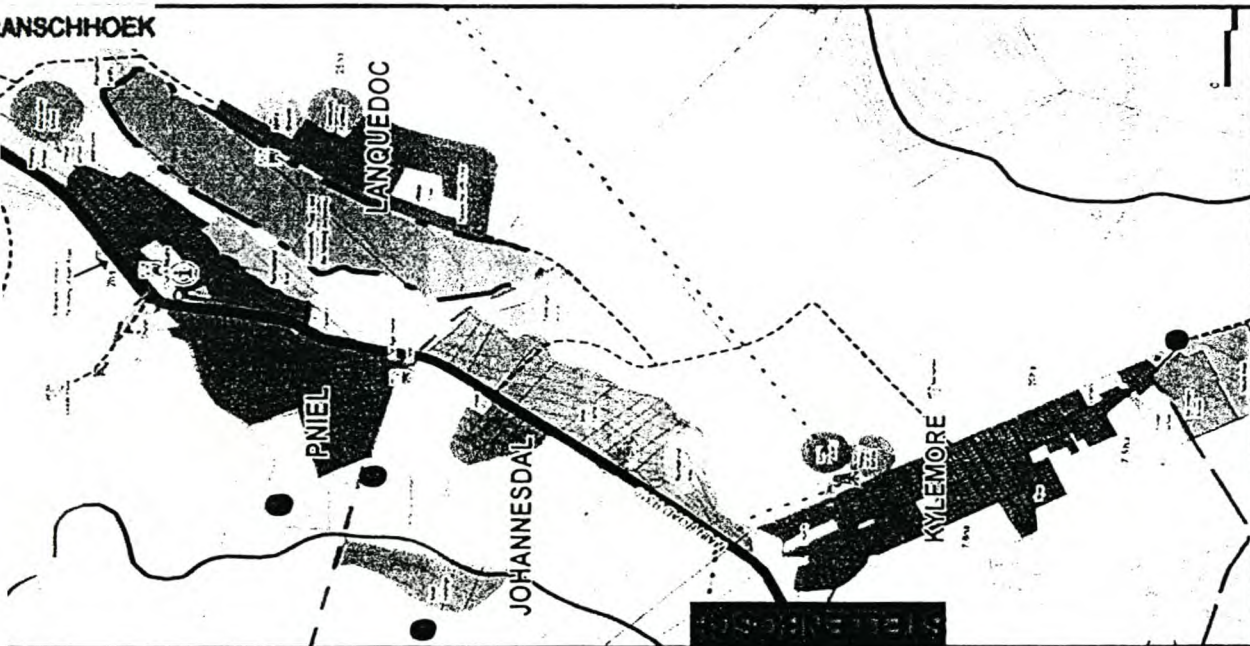
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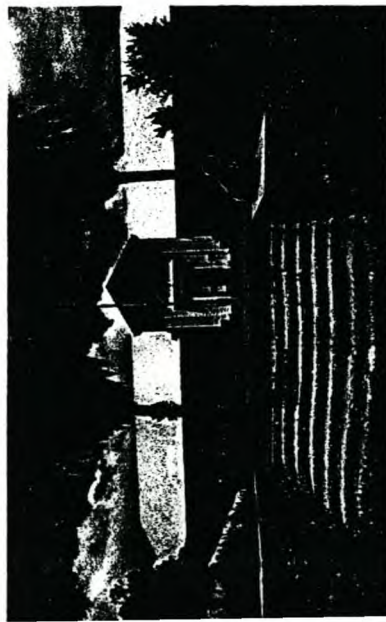
Dwars River MPCC

Tel: 8852661

Fax: 8852662



Boschendal



Bienne donne



Baker Farm houses
in Languedoc